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a participatory and comparative study in England and Nicaragua

Understandings and practices of citizenship in marginalised settings: a participatory and comparative study in England and Nicaragua

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Abstract

Citizenship is premised on universal rights, yet experienced by some citizens as differentiated or conditional, risking their further marginalisation. Deeper understanding of these dynamics can generate insights for inclusive policymaking. This research studies how citizens living in marginalised settings in Nicaragua and England, experience their citizenship. It considers i) how the state constructs and operationalises citizenship; ii) how people in marginalised neighbourhoods experience or contest their citizenship; iii) the dynamics which shape their subjective understandings and practices of citizenship. The analytical approach combines neoliberal governmentality (focusing on discourses and spaces), with additional emphasis on agency. The methodology adopted an innovative approach to comparative research, combining macro-level documentary analysis and key informant interviews, with a micro-level form of cooperative inquiry rooted in participatory and action research traditions. The latter involved participatory visual methods including digital storytelling in a process of individual and collective reflection to generate and interpret data within and between sites. This approach has yielded insights for understanding how ideas and experiences of citizenship are shaped both by government discourses and spaces, and by citizens' own subjectivities.

The international dimension highlights how a neoliberal governmentality approach can explain the power of government discourses and spaces to shape conditional and moralised forms of citizenship in both neoliberal and hybrid social policy contexts. The digital stories illuminate how in both contexts, experiences of citizenship are informed by subjective experiences of marginalisation which are identity-based as well as socio-economic, political and civic. For participants, government spaces for 'active citizenship' are often experienced as inaccessible, or manipulated. The research also highlights factors which can generate citizen subjectivity and agency: opportunities to rebuild personal capacity; opportunities to build relational agency; and access to alternative discourses and spaces in which they may become aware of dissonances between prevailing discourses, norms, and their own realities.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the citizens who joined the co-inquiry processes in Matagalpa and Bristol, with admiration and thanks for their time, friendship, insights and creativity. A special dedication goes to 'Lola' who died in 2018.

Thanks also to those who gave their time to be interviewed, and to those who helped me to make contact with research participants in both sites. My special appreciation goes to Joel Zuniga for his invaluable support, encouragement and friendship. Thanks also to the Economic and Social Research Council, which provided the studentship that allowed me to undertake this PhD, and to staff at the School for Policy Studies and University of Bristol for their support.

This doctoral research process has confirmed to me that – like citizenship – it is relationships that are fundamentally important. This thesis has been possible for me in large part because of the patience and encouragement of my supervisors Dr Sarah Ayres and Professor Patricia Kennett, and of my family, my work colleagues, my friends and my PhD buddies. Thank you all for weathering the ups and downs of this process with me, and supporting me in so many different ways.

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And to my parents Reg and Pene Howard, who would have been so proud.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: DATE: 29th March, 2019

Note: as part of my PhD process, I published a book chapter, drawing on the Nicaragua data:

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Ideas about citizenship, and strategies to engage, activate and direct the actions of citizens, have been at the heart of state policies for centuries. Yet citizenship continues to be a contested concept, and equally contested is how it can be translated into policy by governments, and enacted by people. Once the ideals of democratic citizenship are translated into programmes of welfare and of citizen participation, they regularly fall short of their promise of equality. Globally over the last three decades, governments have made huge efforts to set up mechanisms to engage citizens; from innovations in electoral systems such as referenda in the United Kingdom, through to local forums for dialogue and co-production between citizens and service providers in Europe (Brandsen *et al*. 2012; Sintomer *et al*., 2008), and participatory initiatives such as participatory budgeting and other municipal participatory mechanisms in Latin America (Abers, 2000; Avritzer, 2009; Pearce, 2010). However, this growing global policy trend for encouraging 'active citizenship', ignores the realities of people's lives and is likely only to 'reach' those who already feel sufficiently empowered as citizens to use their voice (Kabeer, 2010; Flores and Hernández, 2018). Failure to address this gap can lead to increasing feelings of powerlessness amongst parts of the population, which is detrimental to peaceful and sustainable democratic society, and can exacerbate the inequalities that these citizens experience. Furthermore, these experiences need to be understood from the perspectives of citizens themselves. This thesis will demonstrate that participatory research approaches offer an important contribution to understanding marginal citizenship.

The focus of this thesis is therefore those citizens who are at risk of experiencing this powerlessness and exclusion, and its aim is **to explore how citizenship is understood and practised by citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua.** This has meant taking both a macro and micro research approach, in order to better understand the relationship between citizenship, marginalisation and participation and how they are actually experienced, in an international, comparative perspective. The research is important and timely because citizenship rights and identity are at the heart of current concerns about inequality, in the context of global pressures to conform to neoliberal models of state restructuring and market liberalisation: neoliberalism understood to be a core organising principle of the global political economy, which drives inequality and exclusion (Harvey, 2005; Griggs and Roberts, 2012; Santos, 2006). Notions of rights and citizenship are becoming more contested as the state retreats from providing services, and citizens are cast in new roles with

regards to the production, consumption and decision-making about local services (Clarke *et al*., 2014). Further, when public goods become scarcer, the basis on which people can access services and resources becomes more contested. It is argued that the rolling out of neoliberal social policies can erode the democratic relationship between citizens and the state, as deregulation increases the rights of corporations over those of citizens (Sassen, 2002, 2015; Brown, 2015). These policies also impact on the relationship between citizens and their communities (Evers and Guillemard, 2013), especially in sites in which multiple forms of deprivation or marginalisation converge and are intensified, and where neoliberal structural adjustment/austerity measures bite more deeply (Contreras *et al*., 2018).

Background and research problem

Evers and Guillemard (2013) identify critical demographic and social changes in Europe since Marshall (1950) set out the triad of liberal citizenship rights: the change in women's role; life courses generally; flexibility and destandardisation of education, work and retirement; globalisation and decentralisation. They argue that these new realities require a new and different 'post Marshallian' concept of citizenship. Marshall's theory referred to the emergence of citizenship in the context of post-war England, and it is important to contextualise theories, and question 'abstracted and universalised versions of citizenship' (Clarke *et al*., 2014, p37). Today in many settings, governments are not serving significant swathes of their electorates. In many cities of the world, millions of citizens living on pavements and in townships struggle for recognition of their rights, and access to services and utilities (Praxis, 2013) and experience 'diminished citizenship' (Houtzager and Acharya, 2011). The liberal democratic promise of a relationship of rights, duties and responsibilities between state and citizens, is increasingly tenuous in the context of shrinking public services, urbanisation and informal settlements, unemployment and a growing informal sector of insecure employment.

Increasingly, citizens are expected to be active in claiming and producing the services that they need (Newman *et al.*, 2004). There is cause for concern about the inclusiveness and justice of such a citizenship - traditionally constructed in relation to the state - becoming defined in terms of self-reliance and 'empowered entrepreneurialism' enacted in the market arena (Harvey, 2005; Berry, 2015). This suggests that how citizenship is *framed* is important, because the language used in policy discourse, the framing of what 'the ideal sovereign citizenship' (Harvey, 2005) looks like from above,

> 'determines what "subject positions" are available for participants to take up within particular spaces, thus bounding the possibilities for both inclusion and agency. Whether they are constructed as *citizens*, *beneficiaries*, *clients*, or *users* influences what people are perceived to be entitled to know and to decide or contribute as well as the perceived obligations of those who seek to involve them (Fischer, 2006: 25-26).

It is timely to direct research efforts at identifying alternative, citizen-centred ideas, discourses and practices which could inform a more inclusive conceptualisation of citizenship (Gerbaudo, 2017).

This study is concerned with citizenship in the current global context of neoliberalism. By citizenship, I refer to a legal status defining rights and duties with regard to the state; an idea constructed through policies, discourses and norms; and a capacity to act, to practise citizenship through a vertical relationship with the state, and a horizontal relationship with and within a community. By neoliberalism, I refer to the subordination of social policy to the logic of free market economics and the increasing market orientation of policy and politics (Hirsto *et al*., 2014).

Citizenship is widely understood to involve political, social and civic rights and responsibilities. These translate into a 'set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural), which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups' (Turner, 1993 p.2). Yet, a significant concern in the scholarship is the depoliticising effect of neoliberalism, and the discrediting of formal channels of democratic participation (Foster *et al*., 2014; Contreras *et al*., 2018). This is evidenced in falling electoral participation, and the reduction of citizenship to market relations (Hay, 2007; Crouch, 2011; Foster *et al*., 2014). As a response to this concern, experiments to increase citizen participation have proliferated as governments have attempted to reconnect the electorate with representative democratic processes (Pearce, 2010; Yates and Bakker, 2013; Faguet, 2014). With a few notable exceptions such as participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil (Abers, 2003), these experiments are seen at best to be peripheral to key decision-making and resource allocation, and at worst, to channel civil society activism and co-opt its energies to serve an instrumental governmental agenda (Taylor, 2011; Davies, 2014).

Neoliberalism continues to dominate the logic of development in democratic societies, partly because of its affinity with liberal democracy, its continued resilience (Crouch, 2011), but also because its market logic underpins policies from the overtly neoliberal (England) to the explicitly socialist (Nicaragua) context, regardless of their different discourses. The literature on neoliberalism provides wide-ranging views and analyses from different national and disciplinary perspectives. For some, it is a capitalist class project of accumulation (Harvey, 2005), or a neoliberal rearticulation of state, market and citizenship 'that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third' (Wacquant, 2012, p.71). Others analyse how neoliberalism coopts or is challenged by local social and political forces to create 'variegated neoliberalisation' (Brenner *et al*., 2010), or identify an 'inclusive neoliberalism' which internalises social policies within neoliberal logics (Mahon and Macdonald, 2010).

Taking a view of citizenship in the context of neoliberalism in both Europe and Latin America is useful,

with the potential for learning from how neoliberalism has shaped social policies and impacted on citizenship differently in the two regions. Across the European Union, neoliberal doctrine has become even more ingrained with the deepening of austerity fiscal measures since the global financial crisis, accompanied by a discourse around the imperative of reducing public spending (Hambleton and Howard, 2013) and played out with a particularly urban and local focus (Donald *et al.,* 2014). Citizens are encouraged (in England) to contribute to this process through volunteering their time and skills to co-produce services that were previously provided by the state – the so-called 'Big Society' (Taylor, 2011). Across Europe and beyond there are both differences and convergences in the shape of neoliberalism and of the conditions and motivations for involving citizens (Schmidt and Thatcher, 2013). The introduction of neoliberalism in Africa was about structural adjustment and 'laissez-faire liberalism in the service of imperial capital', not about technologies of government and responsibilised subjects (Ferguson, 2010, p.173). In Latin America, as Europe becomes more entrenched in neoliberal fiscal austerity, there is talk of the rise of the Left and of the emergence of 'post-neoliberalism' (Yates and Bakker, 2014, p.64), as a set of alternative policies that challenge neoliberalism's orthodoxy and promote social and redistributive policies. Post or anti-neoliberal policies must reverse or merge with the institutions, mechanisms and tools of several decades of the World Bank's domination of their domestic policies, via the obligatory structural adjustment and poverty reduction programmes of the 1990s and 2000s. According to Rückert *et al*. (2017), 'post neoliberal' governments in Latin America tend to promise greater redistribution and social justice, but their practice may not match the electoral rhetoric.

England and Nicaragua have two very different trajectories of state-civil society relations, yet both have experienced shifts in the governing party over recent years from one side to the other of the political spectrum, and both have maintained a preoccupation with the role of civil society. Both countries have been deeply influenced by neoliberal development approaches: the UK since the 1980s, and Nicaragua since the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) lost the 1989 general election. While England remains firmly wedded to a neoliberal development paradigm, in Nicaragua the Sandinista Front were returned to power in 2007 bringing the country into the 'post-neoliberalism' movement in Latin America (Yates and Bakker, 2014). England, since Thatcher, and through the New Labour years, has maintained a strong conviction in the superiority of the market and the supremacy of the rights of the individual over collective rights and interests (Hay and Smith, 2013). Nicaragua, since the return of the FSLN to power has combined political socialism with conservative Christian values and economic dependence on Venezuelan petroleum. In each setting a particular discourse, accompanied by economic and social policies, constructs notions of citizenship, spaces and mechanisms for citizens to interact with the state.

Scholars identify more collaborative relations between governments and the governed where challenges to neoliberalism are emerging (Yates and Bakker, 2014). Mahon and Macdonald (2010) conceptualise anti-poverty movements in Toronto and Mexico City as spaces of resistance to neoliberal rule, and also as sites for the production of alternative policy projects, visions, and strategies. Accounts of 'post-neoliberalism' tend to focus on Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia (Webber and Carr 2013; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012), although the optimism of these accounts has been reduced more recently (Rückert *et al*., 2017; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2018; Kennett and Dukelow, 2018). There is relatively little written on Nicaragua, nor on President Ortega's somewhat contested place within the (itself contested) 'Latin American Left' and at the post-neoliberalism table.

In this context of globalisation and the fragmentation of citizenship, the state's means of shaping citizenship are reduced, and for this reason discourse plays a greater part, as a mechanism through which the state can extend its influence. This thesis uses a neoliberal governmentality framework to analyse how English neoliberal and Nicaraguan anti-neoliberal discourses shape citizenship, through informal processes such as policy discourses and spaces. The participatory research methods inquire with marginalised citizens into their experiences, and find that most experience their citizenship as conditional, fragmented or as non-citizenship, in both settings. Yet, they aspire to an inclusive citizenship that challenges the dominant discourses, reflecting a mismatch between the formal processes and policies of citizenship, and their everyday imaginings and experiences.

This is resonant of what Habermas (1987) theorised as a crisis taking place in contemporary society with the uncoupling of systems (institutions) from lifeworlds (social groups), to the point where systems are driven by their own demands and disconnected from their roots in valid knowledge, social solidarities and individual understandings and capacities (Kemmis, 2008, p.130). This crisis leads to people experiencing their own lives as disconnected and overburdened (Habermas 1987, in Kemmis 2008). In Nicaragua, the hybrid and internally contradictory development model and discourse, while offering some resources to marginalised communities, remain clientelist and compound rather than challenge existing forms of discrimination – particularly those based on gender and sexuality. In England, moralising welfare discourses and deep cuts in funding for social programmes, combine with spatial and economic marginalisation to compound people's experiences of isolation. These contradictions and disconnections are deeply felt in the daily lives of the research participants.

Why this question (and why me)?

When I began the process of focusing my research topic and methodological approach, I had to think back and reflect about my professional career so far. I knew I wanted to research into citizenship, and

I knew I wanted to use participatory methods. Why, and how do they join up? Participation has always been at the heart of my work. I started work as a TEFL teacher, during which time I learnt to experiment with classroom methods to enable individual and group learning. At the time, I did not identify these as 'participatory methods' and the focus was on pedagogy for acquiring a second language rather than emancipation or epistemological theories. But I was drawn to the methodological challenges of classroom participation, individual and collective learning. I then went to teach English at the University of Central America, where I learnt that language skills are more readily acquired when students bring their own experiences and aspirations into their studies. I moved into the world of 'development' and experienced the dynamics of researching, designing and delivering projects with local partner organisations. During the years I spent working with a development NGO (Coda International) in Central America, I accompanied community organisations in processes of organising and mobilising to resolve local issues, and to get their voice heard in local and national policy spaces. This introduced me to the complexity of power relations and the dynamic relationship between citizens' organisations and the state. I brought some of this experience into my Masters dissertation, which explored citizen participation in local governance in Nicaragua (Howard, 2001, see also Howard, 2004).

Subsequently, working as a researcher in the UK domestic sector brought me insight into these dynamics within the UK. Much of my work involved evaluating government initiatives to promote citizen participation and engagement, and neighbourhood renewal. This work developed into comparative research into partnership working between civil society and local government in the 'spaces of local governance' (Taylor *et al.*, 2009; Howard and Lever, 2011), always with an emphasis on the spaces for participation provided by the state. I continued with the ambition to connect up what I had learnt in classrooms and workshops in my teaching and NGO days, with my development as an academic researcher, and also to find ways of connecting up my experiences of working in Nicaragua and England.

The opportunity arose in this doctoral research project. In approaching this PhD, I had to take a step back and reflect, as this was my opportunity to move my understanding on, not to do more of the same. What was missing in this 'puzzle' of citizen participation? I realised that I had been looking at citizen participation in terms of government initiated spaces, and therefore I was talking to those citizens who already step up to these spaces, who identify as someone who has the right to be in a local governance space. What I didn't fully understand, was why some felt able to 'step up', while others did not, and the significance for 'active citizenship'. I had thought about what constitutes a 'participatory habitus' in an article with my colleague John Lever (Howard & Lever 2011), but I had not

yet found the tools to work collaboratively with research participants themselves, to develop a deeper understanding of citizenship from their perspectives.

I realised that all this time, I had been developing skills in participatory research, participatory action research, and action research theory and practice, in that I had been using many of their elements throughout my career, from the classroom through to participatory project evaluations in Nicaragua and action learning with local authorities in England. In developing the methodology for this study, I have drawn on techniques I learnt through delivering training to community activists in Nicaragua, together with methods I have learned more recently through working with colleagues at the Institute of Development Studies. This doctoral research project is an attempt to deepen my understanding of 'citizen participation', through an inquiry into what the *citizen* part of this concept I had so frequently used actually means to the people I am researching with and writing about; it is also testing out *how* citizenship can be researched. I felt strongly that participatory methods should be at its heart, and tried to design the research accordingly, and to allow flexibility in each setting to respond to the group dynamic and contextual factors.

Why 'everyday' citizens?

The main focus of this study is the less researched area of the understandings and practices of citizenship from the perspective of marginalised citizens. It is concerned with the empirical experiences of citizens, but also their analysis, as they challenge dominant conceptions of citizenship and reframe them in ways that are relevant to their everyday lives, often in small but significant ways. Bang (2005) talks of 'everyday makers', who pursue 'small tactics' rather than macro-strategic projects, thereby exercising 'creative capacities as "ordinary" citizens' (see Davies, 2013, p.498). I have chosen not to focus on those citizens who are ready to step up when a new opportunity for participation opens up. Some of the participants in this study are active in their local communities but have had to overcome challenges to be so, while others join in activities hosted by a local organisation, but do not see themselves as community leaders or activists.

The findings report experiences of citizenship that speak of isolation, poverty, anxiety and fear; but also of agency, and small acts of citizenship. Sometimes these acts take place in 'invited' spaces (Cornwall, 2002; Gaventa, 2006) created through government policy; other times they have been claimed, when opportunities arise for citizen action in the cracks of neoliberal reform (Newman, 2013; Davies, 2013) or in opposition to government policies. My research evidences how people sometimes recognise themselves as citizens through engaging in government spaces of social citizenship, or may feel excluded from them. They may also experience themselves as being citizens through the 'contingent possibilities' that emerge in the complex social processes that operate in their marginal

settings (Pearce, 2010, p.232; Harvey, 2007) and through attempts to resist or reconfigure them (Edmiston and Humpage, 2018).

The value of a comparative approach

The research has taken place in and between two research sites, using a combination of documentary analysis, qualitative and participatory methods to generate a rich country specific and comparative analysis. The use of participatory methods has helped to generate collaborative analysis, engaging with different ways of knowing, and exploring 'epistemologies of the South' (Santos 2012b). Such an approach recognises that 'the South' is present in the marginality experienced in England just as it is present in poor neighbourhoods in Nicaragua, and that participatory research can create a space to enable different ways of knowing to be expressed, and for mutual understanding and recognition to develop, within and between research sites. Resonances have emerged which focus attention on the convergence of people's experiences of marginalisation and agency across the sites, and the potential for the 'translation' of ideas between sites, and challenging of dominant understandings (Lendvai and Bainton, 2013). For this reason, the participatory research process in each site was designed to provide a space for research participants to reflect together on meanings, experiences and interpretations of citizenship, both within and between the sites (see Chapter 3).

The value of juxtaposing research into citizenship in the context of neoliberalism in both Latin America and Europe, lies in the fact that the neoliberal project of governance was introduced in Latin America as early as 1972 in Chile and rolled out across the region in the 1980s and 1990s. The impacts of neoliberal restructuring and the responses of Latin American governments and societies may provide learning that is highly relevant in Europe post-2008 financial crisis (Geddes, 2014; Auyero, 2011). I also acknowledge that the two contexts are profoundly different in cultural, historical, socio-economic, political and ecological ways.

Furthermore, while the types and processes of neoliberal projects have been widely discussed (Peck, 2013, Brenner *et al*., 2010; Larner, 2000), their consequences for citizenship is less clear, much less with comparative reference to hybrid forms of (post) neoliberal governance and citizenship projects in the global North ('developed') and South ('developing'). Robins *et a*l. (2008, p.1085), writing from the perspective of South Africa, observe the entanglement of neoliberal and citizenship projects and the tendency of governments, donors and NGOs to promote normative, liberal democratic concepts of citizenship. They call for research that locates government, donor and NGO rhetorics and programmes promoting 'active citizenship' and 'participatory governance' within the situated politics of everyday life. This research responds directly to this concern and contributes to knowledge creation in this area.

Much research tends to be applied either in the 'developed' world, or the 'developing' world; there is a relatively small amount that builds bridges between the two. Given that the development agenda of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals is now considered to be universal (UN 2015), it is a critical time to make connections between these worlds. Citizenship offers a symbolic and distributional promise (Edmiston and Humpage, 2018): the promise of equality, of being part of a just society, of having rights and voice. In practice, this study finds that the possibilities and limits of this promise are experienced differentially by citizens, and shaped by the dynamic relationship between state and societal actors in context.

In this thesis, I use a neoliberal governmentality approach in each setting and comparatively, in order to analyse the particular discourses that are used to construct notions of citizenship, and the spaces and mechanisms provided for citizens to interact with the state. Secondly, I extend this analysis to the grounded experiences and analysis of citizenship undertaken by marginalised citizens themselves, foregrounding their experience and exercise of agency. Participants in both settings associate citizenship with rights, agency, social justice and equality. Their stories and analyses illustrate the challenges for people living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua, to experience these concepts as a concrete reality in their lives. Their stories also illuminate how a sense of citizenship may be generated in these circumstances.

1.2 Research Questions

My central research aim is to understand how citizenship is understood and practised by citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua. This aim translates into three key questions:

1. How is citizenship constructed by the state, and how is it operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua?
2. What is the lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in diverse marginalised settings?
3. What are the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua?

1.3 Methodological approach

My methodological approach combines documentary analysis and twenty qualitative semi-structured interviews, with a form of cooperative inquiry rooted in participatory and action research traditions

(Reason and Bradbury, 2007). The participatory research forms the core of this research, which means that I adopt participatory research principles and take the position that research is an inherently political process, and that the process of research should seek to contribute to social justice (Jordan 2003). It is also a post-positivist and post-structural epistemology and ontology which understands knowledge to be embedded in culture, and that prevailing ideas about 'what is' reflect power relations in society. A participatory approach to researching what citizenship means for people experiencing marginalisation becomes both an ethical and a methodological requirement; a research approach needs to be one which bears witness and facilitates voice at the same time as collecting relevant and useful data. I use the participatory method of digital storytelling in this study, which is an audio-visual (and sometimes also text-based) medium that enables people to craft their stories in their own voices, and to have ownership of the 'data'.

Many of the digital stories created through this research are in some ways testimonies of *non*-citizenship, of what it feels like to be excluded. However, they are also articulations of agency, as the stories communicate (in most cases) a journey that involved overcoming the subjective obstacles to a sense of citizenship. The challenges and limitations of using a participatory approach in a PhD framework (as well as my own limitations), are discussed in Chapter Three. The data generated using participatory research methods is complemented with the policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews, to enable a more macro perspective on the processes which shape citizenship in each context, while the participatory methods explore understandings of citizenship from a bottom-up and micro perspective.

1.4 Contribution to knowledge

Theorising citizenship and citizen agency

The literature on citizenship has demonstrated the centrality of a rights framework for understanding and practising citizenship, especially for people living in marginalised settings (Arendt, 1994; Dagnino, 2005, 2007; Lister, 2007; Nyamu-Musembi, 2005, 2009). Furthermore, there is an extensive literature about how citizens can secure their rights through governance mechanisms and institutions for citizen participation (Abers, 2000; Pearce, 2010; Taylor, 2007; Newman *et al.,* 2010); factors which promote effective or 'empowered' participatory governance (Fung and Wright, 2003; Fischer, 2006; Postigo, 2011); the contribution of citizen participation to improving public services (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001; Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Bovaird, 2007); and the transfer of Latin American participatory

mechanisms to Europe (Sintomer *et al.,* 2008). There is less knowledge about why these mechanisms fail to engage the 'hard to reach', especially from the perspective of those who are marginalised. This research contributes to filling this gap.

My research also makes a contribution to the theorisation of citizenship by bringing together ideas from development studies (Holston, 2009; Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Kabeer, 2005; Lazar, 2012), citizenship studies (Isin and Wood, 1999; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Clarke *et al*., 2014; Turner, 2016), and critical governance and governmentality scholarship within the more North American and European-oriented field of urban studies (Davies, 2013; Newman *et al*., 2004; Peck, 2013; Osborne, 2006; Ferguson, 2010). The framework adopted in this study which combines a neoliberal governmentality plus agency approach, has enabled a focus on the lived experiences of citizenship and the tensions between normative ideas and subaltern versions and practices of citizenship in both contexts, and in comparative perspective.

This neoliberal governmentality plus agency approach has been applied in this research to reveal, in comparative perspective, how governmental discourses and spaces interact with social norms and practices to further marginalise the identities of some citizens, and how these can also undermine their sense of citizenship. In both settings, citizenship discourses are driven by central government, through national programmes and media communications, demonstrating a strong interest in controlling and shaping the citizenship agenda and constructing certain forms of citizen agency. In England, the emphasis on market participation and increasingly punitive welfare regulations construct an idea of an heroic citizen who is work-ready and/or able to participate in delivering community services where state provision has been rolled back (Isin, 2004). Those who do not fit this construct, are fearful of being found undeserving, or shamed in an environment of hostility towards benefits claimants (Edmiston and Humpage, 2018). In Nicaragua, the paternalist regime which continues to operate through a system of clientelism overlaid by discourses of socialism and Christian values, constructs an idea of an heroic and obedient citizen who is ready and able to contribute to the national participatory project. This citizen may be able to access spaces for participation, services and benefits but cannot question the terms, processes or accountability of these. Furthermore, the marginalisation of subaltern identities impacts on experiences of citizenship.

A second theoretical contribution of this research is to foreground citizen agency. Governmentality theory is effective in revealing the operation of hidden and invisible forms of power over citizens, but remains a top-down perspective (Bevir, 2018; Waring and Martin, 2016; Brady, 2014). The foregrounding of agency contributes to the analysis of citizenship through the eyes of the citizen

(Gaventa, 2006): how and when people identify themselves as citizens, the factors that they identify as influencing their agency as citizens, and in what ways they experience inclusion and exclusion as citizens. By exploring citizenship agency and how it is generated (Isin, 2008; Turner, 2016; Hull and Katz, 2006; Kallio, *et al*., 2015), this study evidences how citizens who are marginalised in both settings - not only in the neoliberal environment of English welfare policy, but also in the hybridised socialist-neoliberal policy environment of the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua – are able to identify or develop a sense of agency. This agency often does not equate with governmental notions of 'active citizenship', which in both contexts, is a policy construct and discourse which operates as a technology of governance to shape and direct citizen action. There is evidence of contestation of the discourses, spaces and norms which marginalise. This contestation can be triggered through some kind of disruption, or cognitive dissonance, that shifts perceptions and enables a critique of the status quo. It is argued that this shift produces political subjectivity, which translates into citizen agency when the citizen has access to additional support to take action in a meaningful (however small) way. Through this agency, citizens provide alternative narratives to prevailing exclusionary framings of citizenship.

This knowledge has practical implications. It can inform the practice of the participating individuals and supporting organisations; it is also relevant to national and local government policy-makers seeking to develop more inclusive approaches to citizen engagement, community development and service delivery in neighbourhoods. It confirms the critical role that organisations can play in the everyday lives of people in marginalised settings. Further, by bringing together experiences of citizenship in England and Nicaragua, it also contributes to addressing the divide between theory and policy in the Euro- or Anglo-centric world and the developing world at a time when it is more urgent than ever to share learning and create knowledge through North-South dialogue (Auyero, 2011; Geddes, 2014).

Methods for researching citizenship

Citizenship scholarship has tended to take either a macro-level policy analysis approach, or a micro-level using qualitative methodologies. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the contribution of participatory methods for understanding citizenship from the perspectives of marginalised groups themselves; 'seeing like a citizen', rather than what a governable citizen looks like from the perspective of the state (Gaventa, 2010, see also Clarke *et al*., 2014). In addition, there is little research that has taken into account the potential of cross-national research to bring such participatory knowledge generation processes together in comparative perspective and for policy influence (see Burns *et al*., 2013).

This study has used a participatory action research (PAR) process with groups of citizens in England

and Nicaragua, with the aim of contributing to their own sense of agency as 'everyday makers' (Davies 2013), as well as developing practical and conceptual knowledge with them about citizenship as experienced from the perspective of marginality, and on the possibilities for constructing inclusive citizenship from the bottom up. This research also contributes to methodological understanding about the potential of participatory methods such as storytelling and visual methods for engaging people in dialogue and analysis which, when used in a process of reflection and learning, builds a greater sense of personal and collective agency.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter Two reviews the literature that conceptualises citizenship in terms of rights, and situates this rights-bearing citizen in the context of governance. It considers the influence of neoliberalism on governance and implications for the conceptualisation of the citizen. This literature is contrasted with scholarship that argues for a grounded and differentiated approach to citizenship, which it conceptualises as shaped by subjectivities and identities. Next, theories of neoliberal governmentality are introduced and their significance for shaping citizenship subjectivities. Literature that conceptualises citizen agency is discussed, and the case is made for foregrounding citizen agency in this research. Finally, the framework for this research into citizenship in comparative context is presented: neoliberal governmentality with emphasis on citizen agency.

Chapter Three elaborates the research approach, design and methods, and explains the process of data generation, collection and analysis in England and Nicaragua. The methodological choices are discussed, with relation to the aims of the research and the nature of the research 'problem'. The research design is presented, followed by an account of how research participants were selected. The various methods used to generate and collect data are explained, with a detailed account of the extended digital storytelling process. How the data was organised and analysed is explained, and the final section reflects on the quality, ethics and my own positionality in the research process.

Chapter Four takes a macro-level approach to consider the construction of citizenship from a state perspective. It explores how the state shapes citizenship through policy discourses and spaces, and the kind of citizenship that is constructed in England and Nicaragua. It considers how citizenship is constructed in terms of rights in each context, and how political and social rights are contextually determined and interpreted through policy frameworks and discourses. The governance policies,

discourses and spaces in each context are discussed, and how these shape rights and practices of citizenship. Implications for citizen agency are identified in each context.

Chapters Five and Six draw in particular on the participatory data and analysis gathered through the co-inquiry processes in Matagalpa and Bristol, to explore the lived experience of citizenship, and the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua. It considers how citizenship, shaped in context by governmental discourses and spaces as discussed in Chapter Four, is experienced from the perspective of citizens themselves: in terms of rights; and as belonging, in the formal and informal spaces of citizenship. It discusses how the co-researchers' experiences of citizenship are shaped by their identities, and also through their emotions.

Chapter Six considers citizenship from the perspective of agency. It explores the links between agency and political subjectivity, and how agency is experienced in England and Nicaragua. The analysis discusses the evidence of how agency is generated when it has been eroded: the importance of revaluing identities; how the recognition of others can foster a sense of citizen identity; and identifies triggers that enable critical citizenship and the generation of political subjectivities. Forms of citizen agency as everyday acts of resistance are identified.

Chapter Seven revisits the research aims, and summarises the research findings under each of the three core research questions. The contribution of this thesis to knowledge about citizenship and citizen agency are stated, and the methodological contribution of this research approach to understanding citizenship through a neoliberal governmentality with agency framework is summarised. It is argued that through combining participatory research methods including visual/digital storytelling, with document analysis and qualitative interviews, it is possible to develop a deep, contextualised and comparative analysis of citizenship in marginalised settings, which generates evidence that is relevant for policy and practice.

Chapter Two Literature Review and Theoretical Framework: citizenship, neoliberalism, governmentality and agency

2.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to contribute new comparative knowledge on citizenship in the fields of social policy and development studies. The core research question of this study is: How is citizenship understood and practised by citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua? In this study, citizenship is understood as socially constructed and contested, through both formal and informal processes. Foucault's (1978) concept of governmentality is applied, which is interpreted here as the visible and covert structuring power of state-centred processes. The literature that theorises neoliberal governmentality tends to take a macro-level approach (Peck *et al.,* 2010; Crouch, 2011). This tendency has been critiqued for its lack of insight into the particularities of specific contexts, and the micro level aspects of people's actual experiences (Brady, 2014; Flew, 2012). The conceptualisation of agency implicit in the governmentality approach is therefore enriched by drawing on the literature which links agency with subjectivities and contestation (Isin & Nielsen, 2008; Lister, 1998b; Mouffe, 1992; Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 1999; Turner, 2016).

The analytical approach of this study is thus to apply a framework of neoliberal governmentality with particular attention to agency, in each context, and comparatively. This chapter reviews the literature that has informed this framework; and sets out the rationale for taking this approach to studying citizenship. This neoliberal governmentality and agency approach has been selected because it enables a macro *and* micro approach to analysing on the one hand, how citizenship is constructed through policy discourses and spaces, and on the other hand, the experiences of citizenship of people who are marginalised in spatial and socio-economic ways. This allowed a comparative analysis of the construction and experiences of citizenship in England and Nicaragua, with a nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between the two contexts, given their very different historical trajectories and political ideologies.

This chapter reviews literature that covers a range of approaches to understanding how citizenship is constructed and shaped: through rights; in relation to governance; through subjectivities, and through neoliberal governmentality. The implications for citizen agency are considered from each perspective, and with particular reference to citizenship in marginalised communities. The overarching logic is as follows. Formal citizenship in the modern liberal or social democratic state is understood as embedded in a set of rights. For the purposes of this research, formal citizenship rights need to be situated in the

prevailing policy context. A significant policy approach which emerged in the 1990s and 2000s has been theorised as governance, which casts the citizen as a participant or co-producer working alongside the state to deliver societal benefits. This approach tends to construct citizenship only in relation to the state, which is challenged by scholars who suggest that citizenship may be constructed through identities and subjectivities. Others have emphasised the influence of neoliberalism on governance, in particular Foucault. Foucault's theory of neoliberal governmentality offers an approach to understanding how the state shapes citizenship and citizen subjectivities through formal and informal processes. Foucault (2008) describes these processes as 'technologies'; collections of rational strategies to achieve a desired end, which can be both formal (laws, policies) and informal mechanisms such as the vocabularies and imaginaries deployed in policymaking and the media. The literature reviewed also points to a range of interpretations of citizen agency in marginalised contexts. The need to foreground agency is highlighted, and is interpreted as the potential for citizens to contest technologies of governmentality; to perform as its agents; or to construct alternative discourses and spaces of citizenship.

The discussion is organised as follows. Section 2.2 reviews the literature on approaches to citizenship which construct the citizen as a rights-bearer. Section 2.3 situates this rights-bearing citizen in the context of governance, and considers the influence of neoliberalism on governance and implications for the conceptualisation of the citizen. Section 2.4 introduces literature that conceptualises citizenship as shaped by subjectivities and identities, in order to understand the differentiated and contextualised experiences of citizenship. Section 2.5 turns to theories of neoliberal governmentality and its significance for shaping citizenship subjectivities, but also contestation. Section 2.6 considers how citizen agency is conceptualised in these literatures and makes a case for its foregrounding. Section 2.7 summarises the overarching approach that will be used in this thesis to analyse citizenship in comparative context: neoliberal governmentality with emphasis on citizen agency.

2.2 Rights-based approaches to citizenship

A foundational strand in the citizenship literature constructs citizenship as based in rights. This strand draws on a range of disciplines; from politics (Arendt, 1957), philosophy (Aristotle, see e.g. Morrison, 1999; Habermas, 1994), law, sociology, and feminist theory (Young, 1989; Fraser and Gordon, 1994). For Arendt (1994), a rights-based approach is fundamentally important because it creates the foundations for citizens to appeal to the 'right to have rights', an appeal to the philosophical idea of human rights that can be exercised even when citizen rights are limited or denied within a particular

nation state. Constructs of citizenship in liberal democracies have been informed by ideas of freedom, and the right of citizens to pursue their own interests: Rawls' (1971) utilitarian approach casts citizens as free, independent and self-maximising individuals, and citizenship as a political identity separate from other identities (Isin and Wood, 1999). Marshall (1950) explicitly broadened the definition of citizenship to include, social, political and civic rights. For communitarian and civic republican thinkers, these rights are negotiated in democratic citizenship, which encompasses a diversity of interests and loyalties which need to be included and brought into dialogue (Habermas, 1998; Dagger, 2004). Individual rights and freedoms are balanced with social concerns for inclusion and for collective or common goods.

Scholars observe how some groups within the modern, democratic nation state experience greater marginalisation from full citizenship rights and benefits, resulting in their *fragmented citizenship* (Engel, 2016; Samov and Yishai, 2018). Citizenship is fragmented, in the sense that some rights are granted while others are withheld. This fragmentation it is argued is not fixed, but subject to an ongoing dynamic between societal ideas and institutional malleability that expand or shrink the boundaries of citizenship (Samov and Yishai, 2018). Smith (2012) argues that identities also influence experiences of citizenship: these are '*differentiated'* according to identity-based processes of inclusion and exclusion, resulting in the unequal distribution of rights. These differences are the product of historical processes that legitimise inequalities in the enjoyment of full citizen rights, based on ethnicity, socio-economic status and other identities (Holston, 2012; Smith, 2012; Edmiston, 2018; Könönen, 2018).

Implications for citizenship in England and Nicaragua

This literature suggests that a rights-based construction of citizenship is fundamentally important, but also contested. English citizenship combines a Rawlsian liberal tradition of individual freedoms with Marshall's social democratic citizenship, which assumes citizens' rights to employment, education and welfare. However, a gap has grown between these constructs over the last three decades, since policies have been introduced to liberalise markets, reduce the power of trades unions and facilitate the free movement of labour (Lister, 1997; Hirsto *et al*., 2014; Evers and Guillemard, 2013), which impact on the guarantee of freedoms and social rights. The financial crisis and the response of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Union as well as the UK government, has led to increased pressure on public service providers to cut spending. This has been accompanied by a growing tendency to make the receipt of benefits conditional on progress towards work, which signals a shift in the organising principle of social citizenship from rights, to conditionality (Dwyer, 2004;

Shutes and Taylor, 2014) and suggests that there may be differentiated experiences of citizenship rights in the English context.

Nicaragua became independent from Spanish colonial control in 1821. The Somoza family rose to power in the twentieth century, and introduced reforms to ensure their continuation in government. After decades of conflict, popular resistance to Anastasio Somoza's repressive rule grew into a movement which overthrew the dictatorship in 1979. A revolutionary government was formed by the Sandinista Front for National Liberation ('Sandinista Front' hereafter), and a new constitution was approved in 1987. This constitution established the individual, political, social, family, labour and communal rights of the Nicaraguan people (Asamblea Nacional de Nicaragua, 1987). More recently, liberal notions of individual citizenship which had permeated during the 1990s (see section 2.3) have been challenged by the Sandinista Front, which was re-elected in 2007. Their radical socialist discourse appeals to collective citizen rights, powers and responsibilities. It also incorporates indigenous concepts of collective rights, as in Bolivia and Ecuador, where indigenous communal property rights are beginning to be recognised and protected largely as the result of indigenous struggles against neoliberal policies (Chaplin, 2010; Becker, 2013). This suggests a more inclusive (or non-conditional) approach to citizenship rights in Nicaragua in comparison to England, which is explored in detail in Chapter Four (section 4.2).

However, rights-based conceptualisations of citizenship may fail to account for changes in national attitudes, if they are not linked to analysis of the agency that citizens may need to exercise in order to claim these rights, or to challenge exclusions. For Nyamu-Musembi (2005), experiences of citizenship as rights are likely to be shaped by struggles to claim those rights, and are therefore dynamic. For Hoffman (2004) and Lister (2007), it is helpful to think of citizenship as a 'momentum concept', which is in constant construction, shaped by shifting policy ideas as well as legal rights, and contested by social forces. A policy idea that has shaped citizenship over the last two decades in both settings is *governance* and in particular, *neoliberal governance.* These concepts and related policies, are discussed in the next section.

2.3 Governance and citizenship

2.3.1 The governance turn

The policy shift from govern*ment* to govern*ance* (Rhodes, 1996; Stoker, 1998; Kooiman, 2003; Taylor, 2007) entails a transformation of governing from central control and implementation to a more arms-length 'steering not rowing' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). In governance, citizens are constructed as active participants in the business of governing. The government works in partnership with non-state

actors and opens up spaces, especially at local level, for citizens to play an active role as co-producers of the public good (Ostrom, 1996; Pestoff and Brandsen, 2010; Pestoff *et al.*, 2013). The idea was promoted globally by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, which believed that a reduced role for the state and the involvement of non-state actors would enhance accountability and efficiency through partnership working, mechanisms for citizen engagement, and the sub-contracting of service delivery (Kooiman, 2003; Taylor, 2007; Gaventa, 2002; Baiocchi, 2013). This global governance 'turn' led to the proliferation of 'invited' (i.e. created by government) spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation, which have been documented across the political spectrum and around the globe (Cornwall, 2002; Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2003). This 'turn' coincided with a drive to reduce public spending and sub-contract services, reflecting a common neoliberal response to national debt crises pre-2008, and to the global economic crisis in 2008.

In England, the Labour government (1997-2010) invested significantly in a model of governance that promoted partnership working with civil society, especially at the local authority level, and funded infrastructure organisations to support the development of the sector locally (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008, Taylor, 2011). The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was set up for the long-term development of deprived neighbourhoods, with specific arrangements for building the capacity of citizens' groups to engage in governance (Taylor 2011; Barnes *et al.,* 2007). For citizens in England, this brought an invitation to participate in local governance spaces which appeared to offer a role for citizens in decision-making as well as implementing or monitoring local services (Taylor, 2007; Newman *et al.*, 2004; Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008). However, this participation has tended to be framed not in terms of democratic rights, but as users of services, whereby their agency is in 'making and creating the services they receive' (Barnes, 1999, p.84), and the risk of co-option is intensified (Taylor, 2011). Since 2010 when the Coalition Government took office, structures for citizen engagement in local governance have been pared down, and a shift in priority towards 'local governance' partnerships with private sector actors (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.2).

In Latin America, the governance turn led to a rich diversity of spaces for citizen participation (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2003, Heller and Silva, 2006; Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). There are differing views on the potential for citizen agency in these spaces. Pearce (2010) identifies the emergence of the 'participant citizen' in participatory governance spaces in Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia. Taylor (2004) argues that political agency is possible even under prevailing conditions of clientelism in Latin America, while others argue that clientelism more often undermines innovations in participatory governance in Mexico (Montambeault, 2011). Nicaragua's trajectory is less well documented, but since it shares a history of colonialism and clientelism, this needs to be considered in relation to the

potential for citizen agency in governance spaces (Howard and Serra, 2011; Serra, 2007), and is explored further in Chapters Four and Six.

According to Raco (2013), the emergence of governance coincided with the global rise of neoliberalism as the dominant logic for reducing the state's role and spending in welfare. Since neoliberalism is likely to shape governance differently in context (Brenner, *et al.*, 2010), the significance of neoliberal governance for citizenship is also likely to vary between England and Nicaragua.

2.3.2 Neoliberal governance

The global ascendancy of neoliberalism as an idea is debated in many disciplines. It is argued to be 'the most successful idea in world history' (Anderson, 2001) while at the same time 'virtually no-one and no organisation, ever self-identifies as being neoliberal' (Farnsworth and Irving, 2018). Crouch (2011, 2017) argues that neoliberalism takes (at least) two main forms, but only one is openly advocated. First, a form that is anchored in a belief in free markets and which has become more nuanced as the market's shortcomings become evident; and second, a form that supports corporate domination (Crouch 2017, p.235). According to Hay (2007), neoliberalism combines the liberal democratic philosophy of individual liberty with a belief in the desirability of a global regime of free trade, labour market flexibility, and a role for the state as facilitator and custodian of market mechanisms.

These features have implications for how citizenship is understood and practised. Schmidt and Thatcher (2013) highlight how neoliberalism establishes the relative roles of the state and other actors, in particular the market; and Wacquant (2012) argues that neoliberalism is a political project which involves the re-engineering of the state and re-crafting of the boundaries of citizenship. An important strand in the literature on neoliberalism questions the tendency to see it as a monolithic and autonomous force (Clarke, 2007; Bevir, 2018). Kennett and Dukelow (2018) and Crouch (2011, 2017) find that the influence of neoliberalism on governance and citizenship is likely to vary in context, since neoliberalism shapes policies which are implemented, accepted or resisted differently. Farnsworth and Irving (2018, p.3) observe 'variation and hybridity' in the 'neoliberalisation' of welfare states. This variation is expected between Nicaragua and England.

For example, in Nicaragua, structural adjustment programmes were implemented by successive governments during the 1990s and early 2000s, ushering in public spending cuts and a rapid increase in the number of civil society organisations engaged in service provision, and channelling international aid to fill the space of the retreating state (Howard and Serra, 2011). In the 1990s, the advent of structural adjustment programmes brought a wave of protests from social movements and

organisations within the strong and vocal civil society 'sector'. This organised sector mobilised and coordinated to pressure government to allow greater participation in the policy process, and particularly in designing and monitoring the poverty reduction strategy programmes prescribed by the International Financial Institutions (Serra, 2007; Carretero and Moisés, 2008). Spaces opened up for citizen participation, and, together with the Association of Municipalities of Nicaragua (AMUNIC), civil society organisations successfully lobbied for the creation of a Law of Citizen Participation to protect and institutionalise citizens' constitutional right to participate in national and local decision-making spaces and processes, which was passed in 2003 (Asamblea de Nicaragua, 2003).

This period across wider Latin America saw waves of protests against structural adjustments which, in some countries, brought parties of the political Left into power, often through coalitions of the Left uniting behind an electoral promise of making a break with neoliberalism. The more radical Leftist governments created *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* (ALBA), as an alternative to the regional trading blocs preferred by the international financial institutions. ALBA (which Nicaragua joined in 2007) established a new socio-economic development model which put traditionally excluded groups, such as rural workers and indigenous peoples, at its core and saw an expansion in social welfare spending (Webber and Carr, 2013; Panizza, 2009; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012). Not all social democratic Latin American states joined ALBA: there have been significant tensions between the reformist centre-left and the more radical left (see for example, Wilpert, 2013 on Venezuela, and Perla *et al.,* 2013 on El Salvador). Webber and Carr (2013, p.6) critique an 'authorised' version of the Left (*izquierda permitida*) that is an 'expression of a reconstitution of neoliberalism in a new form', often with state co-option of protest through concessions in some social policy areas, but without changing the overarching neoliberal logic. This distinction between a 'radical left' versus 'authorised left' in Latin America, is informed by Charles Hale's phrase '*indio permitido'* referring to neoliberal multiculturalism in the 1990s, which used the language of recognition of indigenous rights to divide, domesticate and co-opt indigenous movements (Webber and Carr, 2013, pp.3-5). This is particularly pertinent given that the Sandinista Front government of Nicaragua draws on indigenous discourses and combines them with socialist and Christian ideals (see Chapter Four, section 4.2.2). It has also articulated a strong anti-neoliberal stance, perhaps to defend itself from accusations of *izquierda permitida.*

While Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012) had identified signs of an emergent 'post' neoliberalism in Latin America, in their recent work (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2018) they are more cautious, arguing that it is unclear whether the post-neoliberal turn in fact constitutes a break with neoliberalism or simply neoliberalism with a human face. This research will consider the kind of citizenship that is constructed

through Nicaragua's anti-neoliberal discourse, and how it is experienced by ordinary citizens. Through in-depth research with citizens in marginal communities, it will also provide insight into the relationship between their lived experience and prevailing government discourses and practices.

By contrast in England, scholars find more unequivocal evidence of the influence of neoliberalism on governance. Raco (2013) argues that the small state discourse has come from the political Left as well as the Right since the 1970s, suggesting that neoliberal principles have percolated across the English political spectrum and explaining their resilience. New Labour's approach to governance has been described as 'roll-out' neoliberalism (Fuller and Geddes, 2008), and its welfare reforms in terms of 'workfare' and neoliberal transformation (Jessop, 2004). The Coalition Government downscaled New Labour's governance approach, reversing policies to strengthen civil society via the voluntary sector, which has seen a reduction of 66% since 2010 (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2015). The Coalition introduced the much-critiqued 'austerity' strategy (Sen, 2015), which has been maintained by the Conservative Government and cascaded down to local authorities, which must make 'efficiency savings' of around 40% of their budget while facing further pressures from the increasing costs of care services (Local Government Association, 2014). McKee (2017, p.357) argues that the relentless application of market pressures to English local authorities drives standards below what is acceptable and safe, and the 'human impact of austerity' is felt most keenly in marginalised communities, as cutting costs is privileged over all other considerations.

The implications of neoliberal governance for this comparative research into citizenship in England and Nicaragua, is that the logic of neoliberalism imposed on governance is shaping ideas of citizenship and the terms on which the state engages with citizens. Each context will not manifest the same type of neoliberal governance, as the particular governance arrangements draw on a different history and experience of government, and articulation of state, market and civil society (Wacquant, 2012; Rabinow and Dreyfus, 1983). Crouch (2011, 2017) argues that neoliberalism may combine with and accommodate other forces in context to create hybrid forms, but maintains the core domination of corporative interests in national politics. Importantly for this research, the different hybrid forms of neoliberal governance also construct citizen agency differently. Gaventa (2010) distinguishes between neoliberal governance approaches which explicitly follow a market logic, and those which cloak themselves in the language of participation and democracy. The former construct citizens as *consumers* and *entrepreneurs*, and 'empower' marginalised citizens through improving their access to the market via policies such as microcredit and 'workfare' (Wacquant, 2010; Vidra, 2018). The latter uses the language of representation, and of *active citizenship,* to suggest that citizens may participate in the decision-making arenas of their locality. The particular approaches taken in Nicaragua and

England are discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.3).

Neoliberal governance thus frames citizenship and citizen agency, from the perspective of, and with relation to, the state. This study is concerned with how citizenship is constructed by the state, but more particularly, it seeks to understand citizenship from the perspectives and experiences of citizens living in marginalised settings, in their everyday lives. The area of the citizenship literature which emphasises subjectivities as relevant to understanding how citizenship is experienced, is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Citizenship as subjectivities

This section examines how citizenship can be understood in terms of subjectivities informed by identities and feelings of belonging, and how these shape citizen agency and the possibility of citizen 'acts'.

2.4.1 Subjectivities and identity

For civic republican thinkers such as Habermas (1998), citizen identity is created through belonging to a nation state and participating in its democratic processes. Hoffman (2004) however, argues that citizenship cannot be construed purely in terms of a relationship with the state, because the state itself in addressing conflicts of interest, denies citizenship to some groups. Isin and Wood (1999) similarly question the idea of citizenship as a universal status and practice, in that it assumes that each citizen understands and experiences citizenship in the same way. Following Mouffe (1992, 1995, 1996), they highlight the significance of identity as multi-subjective, and find that a person's sense of identity and their sense of citizenship mutually shape each other (Isin and Wood, 1999; Jones and Gaventa, 2002). Kabeer (2005) argues that, for people who are marginalised through global and national policies and processes, citizenship begins with a reassessment and reassertion of those identities which have become devalued through these processes. A consideration for this study therefore is to understand, in context, which identities are recognised or marginalised, and what relevance this has for citizenship.

Social identities are generated through belonging to particular groups, and Isin and Wood (1999) refer to these groups as collectivities, which they argue are expressed through political, social, ethnic and religious identities, in multiple spheres, and through what Mouffe (1995) calls multiple and intersecting 'subject positions'. Yuval-Davis (1999, p.122) further enriches this debate, arguing that we need to understand citizenship as 'multi-layered' and contextual, and that citizenship in

collectivities in these different layers – local, ethnic, national, state, cross- or trans-state and supra-state – is affected and constructed by the relationships and positionings of each layer in specific historical context. Harvey (2005, 2012) on the other hand, sees citizenship as mobilising not around identity-based claims but around rights and disenfranchisement: the struggle of the dispossessed for the right to have rights (see also Holston, 2009; Lister, 2013). These processes may be generative of citizenship, and shape meanings of citizenship, according to how these tensions and trade-offs between rights and identities unfold in context.

This area of the literature suggests that, as well as the need to attend to how the state shapes citizenship as a status and set of rights, it is also important to understand how citizenship identity may emerge from the interaction of multiple subject positions. It confirms the relevance in this study of taking a contextualised and citizen-centred approach to citizenship, in order to assess how citizens identify themselves and are identified by others; whether they experience these identities as marginalised, and if they contest this marginalisation.

Following this logic, experiences of citizenship are generated through informal social relations as well as formal rules and policies. It is often through informal relationships that people understand themselves and feel a sense of identity and belonging in relation to others. These may be in a place or space – in institutions, community groups, neighbourhoods, public spaces and friendship groups (Wills 2009, p.159), or through different identity-based collectivities such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, disability, religion, and age (Yuval-Davis, 1999). Furthermore, Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that belonging has three facets – emotional, social and political. The emotional is often ignored, but a growing theme in the literature pays attention to 'affective' citizenship (Furnier, 2010; Mookherjee, 2005; di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016; de Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016). Howard and Vajda (2017) highlight how for some people, while formal citizenship may be granted, their sense of belonging to a particular group may inhibit a sense of citizenship, if the rights attached to that identity are denied or undermined by stigma, as is often the case with minority ethnicities and sexualities. In these situations, survival strategies may mean staying below the radar, which has implications for the possibility of citizen agency (Pettit, 2016). Agency is the focus of the next section.

2.4.2 Agency and citizen acts

For pragmatist and libertarian thinkers such as Dewey (1927) and Sen (1992), human agency is the intrinsic capacity of individuals to think and act freely according to their own subjective position and goals. For Lister (1997) *citizen* agency also requires the conscious 'belief that one *can* act', individually but also (and especially) collectively. For Isin (2008, p.18), citizen agency is when 'subjects become citizens as claimants of justice, rights and responsibilities' (see also Lister, 1998a; Cornwall and

Gaventa, 2000). Isin and Nielsen (2008, p.18) emphasise the importance of distinguishing between habitus, status and acts of citizenship, and argue that citizen subjectivity is produced though these acts, which instantiate ways of being that are political, ways of being-in-common, and thus create a sense of the possible and of a citizenship that is 'yet to come'. According to this school of thought, citizenship is not only experienced in terms of formal rights, but in terms of the *capacity to act* with relation to those rights. Isin's (2008) influential work on 'acts of citizenship' further opens up citizenship scholarship to explore the idea that ways of acting politically are not limited to the legal definitions and liberal traditions of citizenship.

Isin (*ibid.*) identifies 'acts of citizenship' as situated - taking place in a specific place and a time - when individuals and groups come together to make claims around particular identities and rights. As Isin (*ibid.,* p39) explains, 'we define acts of citizenship as those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle'. Staeheli (2011, p.399) similarly argues for a focus on practices (or acts) of citizenship – 'the daily repetitions that are part and parcel of the relationships that construct and disrupt citizenship – are important to the lives of people and to the potential of citizens to act'.

Theories of citizen participation and civic agency are usually concerned with what citizens do in the public sphere and in the community, and the impact of public policy on their lives (Taylor, 2011). They are less concerned with the internal conflicts, the norms and practices that people must challenge in order to have agency in their personal lives, as well as in their communities and in the public sphere. Isin (2008, p.18) finds that 'new actors' emerge because acts of citizenship disrupt; they contest the 'normal' habitus, practice, conduct, discipline and routines of everyday life. Marxian critical theorists (Gramsci, 1971; Freire, 1972; Horkheimer, 1982; Habermas, 1989; Held 1980) argue that critical analysis is necessary in order to perceive and challenge the structuring processes that underpin social relations, and potentially to break free of them.

This section has set out the argument for understanding citizenship as agency which is shaped by the subjective experiences of citizens, as well as by formal rights and governance spaces. Paying attention to the intersection of multiple subject positions in the lives of citizens can help to bring into focus the structures that underpin social relations, and so to understand the experience of citizenship of people living in marginalised contexts in England and Nicaragua. Looking across these literatures (citizenship rights, citizenship and governance, and citizen identities) suggests that a suitable approach for this research requires analysis of how citizenship is shaped both through the formal structures of governance, and through the informal processes which shape citizens' subjectivities and agency.

Furthermore, and as Lister (2011, 2013) argues, the kind of social citizenship that is articulated 'from above' through laws and policies, shapes how citizenship is experienced and perceived 'from below', especially in circumstances of poverty and marginality. The governance literature however, is not clear about how this 'shaping from above' takes place. Bevir (2018) suggests linking neoliberal governance to governmentality, in order to understand how neoliberal ideas are translated into policies, and how these ideas can be internalised by citizens, shaping their experiences and also their subjectivities as citizens. The next section considers neoliberal governmentality as an approach for analysing citizenship.

2.5 Citizenship and neoliberal governmentality

Governance as a theoretical approach for understanding citizenship, does not explain *how* the state is able to shape citizenship, co-opt citizen agency, or neutralise dissent. Bevir (2011) argues that governance theorists should pay attention to governmentality theorists (and vice versa) in order to study the particularities of the operation of, and resistance to, governmental policies and governmentality technologies in diverse contexts.

2.5.1 Governmentality and citizenship

Governmentality theorists such as Cotoi (2011, p.114) identify governmentality as the key to neoliberalism's success and resilience, in part because 'as governmentality, neoliberalism governs by giving the impression that it is not governing'. This section explores literature that discusses governmentality with relation to citizenship, highlighting two key mechanisms through which it operates – discourse and space – which are of particular relevance to this research.

Foucault (2008) developed the concept of governmentality to explain how governments attempt to produce governable subjects. Governmentality is concerned with the 'conduct of conducts'; that is, it is the governing of a nation (or a group, or oneself) and, at the same time, a reflection on the best possible way of achieving this governing (*ibid.*). More specifically, Foucault theorises how governments exert influence over people's lives both directly and at a distance from the state, thus visibly and invisibly. In the modern decentralised state, this happens in part through the delegation of power to lower levels of government (Jessop, 2004). The tools, or what Foucault calls 'technologies' of governmentality, are collections of rational strategies to achieve a desired end, according to the framework within which the government or the individual is operating. Hence, neoliberalism will produce certain strategies or technologies to operationalise this way of thinking or 'rationality'

(Gordon, 1991). These technologies are both formal (laws, policies) and informal mechanisms such as the vocabularies and imaginaries deployed in policymaking, which can operate as covert processes of control. This theorisation of how state power operates covertly has been further illuminated by the scholarship on power which conceptualises it in terms of more or less visible 'faces' or 'dimensions' (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974; Veneklasen and Miller, 2007; Gaventa, 2006).

Of particular relevance in this research, is that governmentality shapes ideas and subjectivities. Foucault (1983) observed that subjects are disciplined by state power far beyond the formal exercise of coercive power. Operating beyond laws and policies, governmental technologies shape citizens' understanding of themselves in the world, through spaces and discourses which discipline and lead to self-regulation, where discipline 'is structure and power that have been impressed on the body forming permanent dispositions' (Eriksen and Nielsen, 2001, p.130). This means that the power that constructs discipline and order in society becomes internalised to the point that it becomes normalised and even natural. Because of this invisible dimension, governmental ideology or political rationality can become internalised so that people learn to self-regulate their behaviour in accordance with the discursive construction of what is acceptable or 'good' - in relation to this study, the *good citizen*. This self-regulation is experienced as one's own choices and behaviour but is actually an extension and internalisation of the state's preferences. Foucault (1983, 1988) explains that governmentality operates through hidden 'disciplinary' technologies: through surveillance, and also through what he calls 'biopower', which is the power that governments have over our bodies and our lives through the institutions of medicine, education, the criminal system and so on. This 'biopolitics' of power operates in hidden and invisible ways on our 'docile bodies'. As we adopt and internalise the boundaries of acceptable conduct, governmentality is shaping our subjectivities, that is, how we understand ourselves in relation to the world.

Foucault also argues that governmentality individualises and neutralises resistance. As the technologies of governmentality are internalised, the citizen comes to feel separated from others and individualised ('divided inside himself or divided from others'), and thus rendered more governable (Foucault, 1983). What is more, governmentality operates across the governance system, and beyond any identifiable, tangible governmental actors. Because it is impossible to identify the actor who wields the power, we become less able to identify the source of power and so we respond to its technologies with less resistance. We may see the practical benefits of conforming to the pressures of these technologies – and there may be rewards when we do. Over time, we come to accept the boundaries that are established through these technologies and may even begin to police them ourselves and try to impose them on others. This internalisation is a key aspect of how governmentality establishes the limits of what is acceptable - 'each society has its regime of truth'

(Foucault, 1977) - through technologies which authorise and legitimise what is understood to be truth and who can speak it – although Foucault's critics argue that we should avoid overestimating this power (Chomsky, 2011).

Governmentality theory as an analytical tool is appropriate for this research because it enables the study of the invisible as well as visible ways in which governments produce governable citizens; how these ways can be understood in terms of tools (technologies); and how these technologies shape ideas and subjectivities. Two technologies that feature in the governmentality literature that are particularly relevant for this analysis of citizenship, are *discourse and space*, through which it is possible to explore the policy language used to construct ideas about citizenship, and also how these ideas shape and inform citizen's experiences in the formal and informal spaces in which they participate.

2.5.2 Discourse and citizenship

For Foucauldian governmentality theorists, discourse is an important technology through which powerful actors construct regimes of knowledge and truth (Rose, 1999). Foucauldian analysis examines how discourses construct subjects and subjectivities, thus constructing versions of reality, society and identity as well as maintaining practices and institutions which perpetuate a particular rationality (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008; Willig, 2008). Ferguson (2010) argues that neoliberal discourse pushes out other discourses, through its colonisation of the lexicon of rational behaviour and common sense. Central to neoliberal discourse is the framing of entitlements relating to social citizenship and welfare, i.e. discourse constructs the kind of citizen who is deserving of these entitlements. Gregorio and Merolli (2016) observe how neoliberal governmentality summons the 'affective' citizen to contribute to community projects. In this shift to 'affective citizenship' (Furnier, 2010) is the policy idea that citizens need to be 'feeling the appropriate emotions' (de Wilde & Duyvendak, 2016, p.974). This appeal to emotions and values suggests that governmentality reaches into the cognitive and affective processes of the individual and group to shape their perceptions of themselves and their position in society.

This shaping of ideas and subjectivities of citizenship has implications for democracy. The following sections elaborate on how the literature suggests that neoliberal discourses may i) responsibilise, ii) moralise, and iii) shape the democratic content and performance of citizenship.

Discourse and responsibilised citizenship

In neoliberal contexts such as England, Osborne (2006) argues, the good or deserving citizen is purposefully constructed as rational and self-maximising. For Isin (2004, p.222), late twentieth century biopolitics operated with the 'bionic citizen' at its centre - a 'modern liberal subject' constituted as 'a

competent subject whose conduct and government were crucial for the health, wealth and happiness of species-bodies'. The neoliberal citizen is required to be an agent of the neoliberal project. Harvey (2005, p.42) similarly notes this process and observes that while the state withdraws from some arenas, it implements interventions and efforts in other arenas to promote new conceptions of what it means to be an individual and an agent. Put in another way, 'in order for neoliberal policies to be implemented, people on the ground had to start engaging with (and perhaps performing) neoliberal concepts of agency' (Gershon 2011, p.538). Neoliberal governmentality thus understood, creates new forms of agency – not as forms of resistance, but of taking neoliberalism into one's own self-perception, whereby the responsibility for wellbeing is one's own. This idea is further developed by theorists who describe how neoliberal governmentality informs the reflexive relationship of the subject with herself and identify the notion of 'self-care' – the perception of the self as a business that one owns and must manage effectively (Gershon, 2011; Miller and Rose, 1990; Brown, 2006; Cotoi, 2011).

In England these rationalities are deployed through discourses to shape the boundaries of who is understood to be a 'citizen', and 'summon' citizens to adopt certain behaviours in order to contribute to the state's agenda (Newman and Clarke, 2009). For Turner, Basham and Vaughan-Williams (2013) in Europe, the 'good citizen' is constructed as a 'liberal, white, bourgeois, heterosexual, man and this inherently leads to the powerful hierarchisation and securitisation of others'. Isin (2004, p.222) finds that the progress of neoliberalism has led to a shift away from the 'bionic' neoliberal rational citizen, governed by self-interest. He argues that this self-sufficient neoliberal citizen was an 'overburdened' construct, and has been replaced by the self-governing 'neurotic' citizen, who must navigate a punitive privatised and securitised world, in an age of growing uncertainty (*ibid*., p.223). Neoliberal governmentality acts upon the emotions of this neurotic citizen to influence their behaviour, and also requires this citizen to 'understand itself as an affect structure' (*ibid*.), which I understand to mean, to allow their citizenship to be shaped through their emotions.

Such analyses are less abundant on Nicaragua, although Nouvet (2014) offers an anthropological insight into the gendered impact of neoliberalism on affect and agency. For Marsland (2006), in post-colonial and developing country settings (such as Nicaragua), governments combine neoliberalism with the language of independence and patriotism and invite citizens to contribute to constructing the nation. Deviation or non-compliance can be interpreted as a failure of loyalty or commitment to the national project, and so governmentality here also acts on citizens' emotions. This implies that this research into citizenship in the context of neoliberalism will find evidence of processes which shape emotions and feelings of both responsibility for oneself, about doing the right thing, and also anxiety about failure.

Discourse and moralised citizenship

Rose and Miller (1992, p.178) highlight how discourses (underpinned by particular political rationalities) have a characteristically moral form: they proscribe the appropriate powers and duties for authorities and set out 'the ideals or principles to which government should be directed - freedom, justice, equality, mutual responsibility, citizenship, common sense, economic efficiency, prosperity, growth, fairness, rationality and the like'. Fournier (2014) goes further, to argue that those who deviate from the right kind of citizen behaviour (e.g. 'active citizenship'), or fail to act 'rationally', may be punished (e.g. labelled as 'troubled' or 'chaotic'), since neoliberalism's political rationality constructs citizens as self-directing individuals who make rational choices to make the right decisions in a competitive environment.

Implications for democratic citizenship

Some scholars identify a tension between these discourses of neoliberal governmentality, and democratic citizenship. Ferguson (2010: 172) argues that, through the new constructions of citizenship as "active" and "responsible", citizens and communities in neoliberal policy discourse are expected to operate, not on the basis of political, social and civic rights and responsibilities, but 'as a miniature firm, responding to incentives, rationally assessing risks, and prudently choosing from among different courses of action'.

Constructed as a consumer, user or client of services in a marketised relationship with the state, the citizen is not discursively constructed as a rights-holders (Cornwall, 2002; Lister, 2007; Gaventa, 2010). The agency of this consumer citizen is to monitor service provision (perhaps via online systems for user feedback), or in decentralised governance mechanisms in the 'community', to inform decisions about community-level services such as refuse collection, street cleansing. Political agency is not recognised in this conceptualisation, and questions of rights, inequalities or justice are kept off the agenda (Young, 1990). Others argue that 'active citizenship' discourses promising empowerment, prove empty when analysed in the context of neoliberal governance reforms: when the state retreats and offers up the space for citizens to be 'empowered' to take on services themselves, it is the market, not citizens, which is ready to step in, in what has been described as the 'politics of abandonment' (Clarke, 2008; Raco, 2013).

There are different accounts of how this shift takes place. Gershon (2011, p.541) sees discourses of neoliberal governmentality as emphasising the 'skills, traits and marketable capacities' of the neoliberal agent. Osborne (2006) argues that in England, new public management (NPM) introduced private-sector managerial techniques grounded in rational/public choice theory into the public sector (*ibid.*). As a discourse, NPM framed itself as a technical and problem-solving approach, and as a regime

of truth above ideology, so that it is perceived as non-political in its application even in the decentralisation of service provision, and promotion of civic participation (Ferguson, 2006; 2010). Hay (2007) describes such technologies as deliberately depoliticising issues around which citizenship claims were previously mobilised, by shifting them out of the political sphere, and into the public, private and ultimately, personal, spheres. In this way, neoliberal policy discourses emphasise the individual, active economic agent and depoliticise the structural barriers that many face (Schmidt and Thatcher, 2013).

In Nicaragua since 2007, socialist discourses have replaced previous neoliberal discourses grounded in NPM. Yet, broader socio-economic policies continue to be underpinned by a neoliberal logic which prioritises corporate interests over democratic citizenship (see Chapter Four, section 4.4). These conflicting rationalities are likely to have significance for experiences of citizenship. Gaventa (2010, pp.60-64) theorises how different neoliberal approaches disconnect citizenship from democratic processes. He argues that while the types differ in some ways, they all construct a politically 'residualised' form of citizenship, in the margins of the state or the market. This residualisation of citizenship is seen as a critical issue for democracy in diverse national settings (Gaventa, 2010; Crouch 2011, 2017). Kennett and Dukelow (2018, p.4) similarly critique the neoliberal state's increasingly 'coercive commodification of social policy' in Europe, and describe 'neoliberalism's tense relationship with democracy'. Dumenil and Levy (2011) suggest that the state deploys discourses which appeal to 'national control and nation-state identity' in order to maintain neoliberal legitimacy in Europe – which may also function to obscure the centralisation of power amongst political and economic elites in Nicaragua.

Through examining discourse, understood as a technology of governmentality, this study explores how ideas, practices and behaviours of citizenship are shaped, in the two national contexts. In particular, discourses of active citizenship, and their moralising and affective dimensions, will be carefully analysed in both contexts. However, Brady (2014, p.13) warns of 'governmentality's Achilles heel - namely its lack of attention to multiplicity and context'. I attend to this concern by foregrounding agency (see 2.6); but governmentality may also be grounded and contextualised through analysis of space as a technology.

2.5.3 Spaces of citizenship

Foucault's work, while rich in references to space, is less explicit about its operation as a technology. The concept has been developed in interesting ways by geographers over the last decade and is useful

for thinking about governmentality in relation to the spatial dimensions of citizenship and marginalisation, which are important in this study (see e.g. Harvey, 2005; Huxley, 2008). Foucault (1967) and others (Lefebvre, 1974; Cornwall, 2002), conceptualise the spatial boundaries that govern people as both physical and discursive: 'space' is both a physical location and a social construct, denoting the site in which social relations take place, hence a site in which power operates. Much arms-length governance operates at the 'front-line' or in the community (Taylor, 2011), yet 'the community' itself is an imagined or constructed space (Anderson, 1983, 2006). The community becomes a physical and discursive space in which governments may engineer forms of citizenship through mechanisms of citizen participation and representation.

The concept of space therefore facilitates a link with governance theory and helps to ground and contextualise governmentality, which is highly pertinent to this comparative research. In Europe and in Latin America, decentralised forms of democratic governance (e.g. ward and neighbourhood councils and forums) proliferated during the 1990s and 2000s. These spatial technologies are often promoted to facilitate greater accountability between the state and citizens, thus deepening democracy (Fung and Wright, 2003; Heller, 2001; Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). Through participation in these spaces, citizens are expected to become empowered as they enter into dialogue with service providers, and even become co-producers or providers of services themselves (Bovaird, 2007; Fournier, 2014; Taylor, 2007). This involvement promises greater civic engagement, and potentially a 'possible solution to the public sector's decreased legitimacy and dwindling resources by accessing more of society's resources' (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016, p.427). Carmel and Harlock (2008) on the other hand, argue that while mechanisms for citizen participation appear to prefigure a new more horizontal relationship between state and citizens, they can in fact be a form of containment and control.

Local 'spaces' of participation are further critiqued by governmentality scholars as technologies which, like discourses, may 'responsibilise' citizens rather than increase their political power (Rose, 1999), and through which the state manages citizens at a distance (Cornwall, 2002; Ferguson, 2010; Rolfe, 2017). For Miller and Rose (2008, p.352), the expansion of government policy into the community, rather than signifying deeper democracy, reconfigures the relationship between government and citizens so that governmental rationalities are internalised by people as they participate 'in a whole variety of locales and localities – enterprises, associations, neighbourhoods, interest groups and, of course, communities'. Increasingly, spaces of citizen participation are co-opted, controlled and orchestrated by the state.

De Wilde & Duyvendak (2016, p.974) analyse the discourse of regeneration policies targeting the spaces of marginalised neighbourhoods, and find that governments have turned to lecturing their populations on citizenship – and more particularly 'the "communitarian underpinnings" of citizenship – where citizenship is to be "earned" by embracing the spirit of community responsibility and "morality"'. Furthermore, as neoliberal austerity shrinks welfare services, fewer services are universal and access to social citizenship benefits are increasingly guarded by eligibility criteria. This process is characterised in advanced (neo)liberal economies such as England (and New Zealand) by narratives of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' welfare claimants (Patrick, 2016; Edmiston and Humpage, 2018), which combine with spatial disadvantage to further moralise or stigmatise citizens.

Understanding space as a technology enables analysis of how the state extends its influence to shape localised experiences of citizenship in the diverse contexts of England and Nicaragua, through decentralised forms of government and in marginalised neighbourhoods, which are the objects of policy measures. This study considers the discourses and dynamics which shape local spaces of citizen participation, paying attention to the marginalised community as a space in which governmental policies and discourses converge, to construct ideas about the citizen who lives here (Wacquant 2007; Wacquant *et al.,* 2014; De Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016).

To sum up, a neoliberal governmentality approach which analyses the governmental technologies of discourse and space can be applied to explore *how citizenship is constructed by the state, and how it is operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua.* This approach also generates analysis relevant for understanding *the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups* in these contexts. Following the literature reviewed here, a neoliberal governmentality approach suggests that citizenship will be experienced as responsibilised, moralised and may be depoliticised.

In the English context of neoliberalised social policy, cuts in public sector funding and welfare reforms, this approach will examine how the state constructs meanings and practices of citizenship through the discourses and spaces it promotes, discussed in Chapter Four. The approach will also enable analysis of the experiences of citizens in marginalised communities, and the extent to which their citizenship is experienced in terms of rights or rather as 'powerlessness, lack of voice, and denial of full human rights and diminished citizenship' (Lister, 2013, p.112).

In Nicaragua, this approach can be brought to analyse governmental discourses of citizen power and spaces for participatory democracy, in the context of global pressures to conform to neoliberal governance, and the nation's dependence on international financing and investment. Houtzager and Acharya (2011, p.1) – in a similar vein to Lister on the UK - interpret the effects of neoliberal

governance in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico) as producing 'diminished citizenship' through systematic exclusion from mandated public goods and services, which they argue significantly impacts on the citizenship and life chances of some social groups. According to Ferguson (2010) and Cotoi (2011), neoliberal technologies also operate in the context of post-colonial countries, through the sub-contracting of public services to private sector providers, and the protection of multi-national commercial interests, although these policies are likely to be obscured by a development discourse of poverty reduction.

In each setting, an analysis of discourses and spaces will illuminate the kind of citizenship that is constructed, but also the citizen agency that is made possible. The governmentality literature suggests that citizen agency is limited, since citizens are constructed as 'objects' of state pedagogy (Newman, 2010), and that certain types of 'active citizenship' are endorsed and enabled by the state (Ferguson, 2010). However, critics of governmentality theory argue for a greater emphasis on agency (Bevir, 2011, 2018; Caldwell, 2005; Martin and Waring, 2018). Bevir (2018, p.5) challenges what he perceives as the 'neglect of agency' by governmentality theorists, who 'characteristically offer reified and monolithic accounts of modern power, with little sensitivity to diversity, heterogeneity, and resistance within and over time'. In the following section, I consider these perspectives and make a case for the foregrounding of citizen agency in this neoliberal governmentality approach to analysing citizenship in England and Nicaragua.

2.6 Foregrounding citizenship agency in neoliberal governmentality: contestation and resistance

For Foucault, governmentality, agency and resistance are fundamentally linked, since agency emerges in the act of resisting the structuring power of governmentality. Foucault (1990) argues that in its very operation, discourse creates the opportunity for itself to be challenged. In other words, discourse is generative of contradictions and weak spots which make it 'possible to thwart': 'a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy' (*ibid*:100-1). Featherstone *et al.* (2015) note a complex relationship between neoliberalism and resistance, while Kennett and Dukelow (2018) observe the tendency for neoliberalism to 'enfold' and co-opt dissent. This would suggest that neoliberal governmentality suppresses citizen agency.

Bevir (2018, p.5) on the other hand, challenges what he sees as governmentality's 'essentialist' accounts of the structuring power of the state, to argue that governmentality scholars need to pay

greater attention to agency, in order to understand how social practices are constructed differently by many actors, through 'contingency and contestability', and 'inspired by conflicting and competing ideas and values'. Waring and Martin (2016, 2018) argue that governmentality theorists tend to see subjectification as linear, and that discourse automatically shapes docile subjectivities, without considering how this might, or might not happen, and through which mechanisms or actors. Brady (2014) also critiques governmentality approaches as tending to observe from above - and theorise from this perspective. A focus on actual people, located within a specific place over a period of time, is required so that the researcher is 'thrust into the multiplicity and dynamics of everyday social life [which] gives these researchers greater insights into the multiplicity of power relations and practices within the present' (*ibid.*: 13). The participatory research approach adopted in this study of citizenship in the two contexts, uncovers the varying accounts of how people come to experience and contest constructions of citizenship.

The lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in diverse marginalised settings can be theorised in a range of ways. For some scholars, the process through which citizens begin to articulate and assert their political subjectivity involves a cognitive shift. Foucault saw power as all-encompassing and operating through technologies of governance and of the self, and hence internalised. However, he also saw possibilities for resistance, in the moments in which we can recognise and question the socialised norms and boundaries of our environment or habitus, i.e. exercising critical capacity (Foucault 1980, 1984, 1991a). For Turner (2016), the disruption of 'normality' (structured and internalised through neoliberal governmentality) comes about when there is 'recognition of an injustice', which is generative of political subjectivity and constitutes the basis for agency. Cadman (2010) and Martin and Waring (2018, p.4) similarly suggest that resistance to marginalising processes and discourses may generate citizenship identity, but that this requires 'the capacity for critique and creativity, and the conception of how we might be other than what we are' in order to take ownership of our own subjectivity.

It follows that to understand how citizen agency is generated requires surfacing how critique becomes possible. Returning to Hay's account of the depoliticising effect of neoliberalism, and Isin's concept of 'acts of citizenship', a disruptive citizen act could involve the *re*politicisation of an issue that had been depoliticised (i.e. moved into the private or personal sphere and made non-political or even 'natural' (Hay, 2007; Fraser, 1990). In the context of English welfare, Edmiston and Humpage (2018, p.481) see these acts in terms of resisting or reconfiguring the prevailing welfare settlement, in ways which may 'generate creative ruptures that push and pull on the tethered boundaries of citizenship'. Holston (2009: 245) sees resistance in terms of rights claims, when 'insurgent citizens' generate 'the conviction of having a right to the city', which 'turns residents into active citizens who mobilize their

demands through residentially-based organizations that confront entrenched national regimes of citizen inequality'. When they identify and mobilise around this sense of rights, insurgent citizens begin to challenge the prevailing governmental discourses and spaces of citizenship.

Governance approaches may overemphasise the territorial, and obscure other dimensions of experience and marginalisation. Kallio, Häkli and Bäcklund (2015) identify the need to combine territorially grounded perceptions with understanding of relational modes of practicing agency. Burns *et al*. (2013) highlight how processes of marginalisation operate through the intersecting axes of race, ethnicity, gender, class sexuality, age and disability. Resistance to marginality will therefore be differentiated according to the combination of multiple subjectivities which provide 'different accounts of what it is to be political' (Turner 2016, p.146). This means taking a disaggregated and agentive approach to researching citizenship, while at the same time 'keeping a focused eye on the governmental mechanisms which foster and shape (often violently) marginality' (*ibid*., p.146).

Resistance is therefore not only a collective action, but also a personal and subjective process. Bang (2005) signals the micro-sites of resistance in the daily lives of 'everyday makers'. Mc Nevin (2011) similarly argues that through everyday resistance, an everyday citizenship is nurtured which becomes political, since this resistance to exclusionary discourses and practices represents a radical questioning of what it means to belong and can articulate alternative discourses of citizenship. This resonates with Turner's (2016, p.146) view that resistance means contesting marginality 'not only as victims which need "inclusion" but as subjectivities'. Kabeer (2005) similarly describes a construction and experience of citizenship that includes justice for citizens experiencing exclusion or marginality. Lazar (2012, p. 334) enriches this debate arguing that citizenship can be 'a means of promoting particular ethical values, different from those in the mainstream'. In a similar vein, Honneth and Fraser (2003) imagine alternative discourses of citizenship to address redistribution and recognition, and Lister (2013) respect and dignity. This literature suggests that alternative citizenship claims are likely to be rooted in rights, values and ethics.

Another strand in the citizen agency literature focuses on acts of 'ordinary' people. Davies (2013, pp. 497-99) takes up the idea of the citizen as 'everyday maker', and suggests that the concept is 'claimed and contested among pragmatists, reformists and revolutionaries who see "doing differently" as a path beyond capitalism'. Citizens as 'everyday makers' seek to 'accomplish small-scale, gradual changes by constructing new ways of living and doing politics from the bottom-up' (*ibid*., p.499). Neveu (2015, p.148) advocates studying citizenship through the analytical approach of 'the ordinary', arguing that it 'allows us to open up the analysis to sites, moments and practices usually considered as "non-political", or as "infrapolitical", and to include them in the frame'. The ordinary and everyday

can be sites of resistance of marginalised and vulnerable groups engaging in 'circumspect struggle' (Scott 1990, p.183). Clarke *et al.* (2014, p.22) similarly argue that citizenship agency operates in the 'sites of struggles around and about citizenship' and these sites 'wherever they are, [are] *sites of politics'* (see also Isin, 2012). This research adopts this focus on 'ordinary' citizens, people who are not high-profile community leaders or 'the usual suspects' who readily engage with government policy or mechanisms for citizen participation. Through this focus, the research seeks to understand their subjectivities, how these inform their sense of citizen agency, and whether they articulate alternative discourses, in the everyday settings in which they live, in Nicaragua and England.

Discourses and spaces are likely to shape the subjectivities and agency of citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua. According to Baumberg, Bell and Gaffney (2012), in England the welfare discourse legitimises the withdrawal of the state's responsibility, by encouraging the public to think sceptically about the deservingness of claimants (see also Lundström 2013, JRF 2016b). Patrick (2016, p.256-7) finds that the dominant negative narrative around welfare benefits is internalised by claimants, leading them to articulate a 'personal stigma of benefits', but also to manage this stigma by imagining 'others' less deserving than themselves. Patrick identifies this latter act as a 'defensive form of citizen engagement' (*ibid*).

Kennett and Dukelow (2018) on the other hand, argue that citizens may resist such exclusionary discourses through small-scale acts and practices of solidarity and support. In the English context, when prevailing media and political discourses focus blame on the individual for failing by framing problems as individual rather than societal (Lundström, 2013), citizen agency may demand contesting and reframing these discourses. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Front government's discourse is explicitly *anti*-neoliberal, as Perla and Cruz-Feliciano (2013) observe, and citizens' rights are linked to national sovereignty 'in the face of U.S. and European meddling' (Nuñez 2009, p.242). Cupples and Glynn (2018) however, argue that this discourse allows the government to keep silent on the subject of human rights violations – a strategy of producing public ignorance to evade criticism and consolidate power. The implications for citizen agency may be that some citizens are silenced, or that the spaces in which they may participate are carefully controlled.

To summarise, this research adopts a neoliberal governmentality approach which foregrounds citizen agency. It has been argued that, while a neoliberal governmentality approach does not exclude the possibility of citizen agency and resistance, it may obscure them. A more agentive conceptualisation of citizenship enables us to pay attention to the small everyday acts of resistance and solidarities, which challenge or problematise mainstream concepts of citizenship (Lazar, 2012) and suggest alternative discourses. It can also enable a more nuanced understanding of how governmental

discourses and spaces shape how citizens express their agency. The literature highlights how through paying attention to agency in this study, it may be possible to observe if and how political subjectivity and citizen agency may be generated, through critical engagement with marginality/marginalising discourses (Turner, 2016; Edmiston and Humpage, 2018), through critique and creativity (Martin and Waring, 2018), and in everyday citizen acts of resistance (Isin, 2008; Davies, 2013). With an emphasis on agency, the application of this approach in context will facilitate understanding of the lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in diverse marginalised settings.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a range of literatures on citizenship: rights-based approaches to citizenship which construct the citizen as a rights-bearer; citizenship in the context of neoliberal governance; citizenship as constructed through subjectivities; through to the construction of citizenship through discourses and spaces of neoliberal governmentality. The significance for citizen agency has been considered in each conceptualisation, and citizen agency understood in terms of subjectivities and contestation is brought to enrich the neoliberal governmentality approach. The approach that will be carried forward in this thesis to analyse experiences of citizenship in marginalised settings in Nicaragua and England, is thus neoliberal governmentality with emphasis on agency.

A research approach to citizenship which overemphasises agency risks ignoring the structural forces which limit, co-opt or neutralise agency. A neoliberal governmentality approach which does not foreground agency, runs the risk of being too linear or deterministic. Human agency tends to disappear, or is articulated as entrepreneurial, or is pathologized as neurotic or dysfunctional. The contribution of neoliberal governmentality theory in this research is to explain how citizenship can be understood as constructed, boundaried and controlled through technologies of power and knowledge which are deployed through discourses and spaces to shape and govern the behaviour of citizens. The literature reviewed that takes a neoliberal governmentality approach to studying citizenship suggests that we can expect citizenship to be experienced as responsibilised, moralised and depoliticised (Rose and Miller, 1992; Gershon, 2011; Wilde & Duyvendak, 2016). The approach also draws on the contributions of critics of the 'governmentality school' who argue for a greater attention to human agency and the possibility of diversity and resistance (Bevir, 2011; Caldwell, 2005; Martin & Waring, 2018). Agency is therefore foregrounded in this neoliberal governmentality approach, which adds a citizen-centred and grounded dimension: 'seeing like a citizen' (Gaventa, 2010) helps to focus on

people's agency, and also draws attention to the subjectivities and conditions that limit or support their agency and capacities to act as citizens (Nyamu-Musembi, 2005, 2009), and to perform acts which are generative of political subjectivity and citizenship (Isin and Turner, 2008).

This approach informs the analysis of the discourses and policies of the Coalition and Conservative governments in England, and the radical Leftist discourse and positioning of the Sandinista Front government in Nicaragua; and how these discourses and their implementation impact on citizens (discussed in Chapter Four). Furthermore, the spatial and micro-level focus at the heart of this research helps to ground the abstract concepts and discourses of citizenship in the everyday experiences and contestation of people living in marginalised settings (Chapters Five and Six). The research will also consider the extent to which this neoliberal governmentality approach, with its foregrounding of agency, can explain the dynamics shaping meanings, subjectivities and practices of citizenship for people living in these marginalised communities (Chapter Seven).

Operationalising this approach in this research, has methodological implications and suggests choices of methods for research and analysis. Brady (2014, p.13) argues that governmentality approaches can be enhanced through 'governmentality inspired' ethnographic case studies, which can highlight multiple power relations, spaces for contestation, and 'the actual processes through which subjectivities … are formed'. I have chosen to bring participatory research methods into this neoliberal governmentality approach, with a similar intention. Participatory, as well as ethnographic, research methodologies are of great value in researching subjectivities, marginality and citizenship. Hull and Katz (2006, p.47) argue that participatory methods can be sensitive to 'the constraints of specific social, cultural, and historical contexts' and when used as part of a process, can support people to 'develop agentive selves'. Participatory research processes can also help to make visible those actions which may be kept 'beyond the visible end of the spectrum' (Scott 1990, p.183). In Chapter Three, the methodological choices for researching citizenship are discussed in detail.

Chapter Three Research Methodology and Process

This chapter sets out the research approach, design and methods, and describes the process through which data was generated, collected and analysed in England and Nicaragua. The chapter is divided into six sections. In 3.1, I present the aims of the research and the nature of the research 'problem', and discuss the methodological options for approaching this question and the particular approach that was selected. In 3.2, I present the design and methods of the research. In 3.3, I explain the process through which research participants were selected. In 3.4, I describe the process of data generation and collection. In 3.5, I explain how the data was organised and analysed. Finally, I explore questions of quality, ethics and positionality in this research process (3.6).

The research design is complex, as it combines a number of methods and describes a relatively complex approach. As a result, this is necessarily a lengthy chapter. The first half (sections 3.1 and 3.2) focuses on the rationale for the approach, overall design and choice of methods. The second half of the chapter (3.3 onwards) gives an account of how these were applied and how the process unfolded in the context of my research, including methodological and ethical decisions made along the way.

3.1 The nature of the research problem and philosophical approach

The aim of this research is to understand how citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua understand and practice their citizenship. The questions that I have set out to answer are as follows:

Research Questions:
1. *How is citizenship constructed by the state, and how is it operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua?*
2. *What is the lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in diverse marginalised settings?*
3. *What are the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua?*

This inquiry has two dimensions. The first uses documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews to gather data that responds to Research Questions 1 and 3. The second dimension is a *co-inquiry*, which uses a range of participatory and qualitative methods to draw on different forms of knowing, to explore and make sense of individual and collective experiences of citizenship in each site, and between sites. This co-inquiry addresses all three research questions, but with particular emphasis on Research Question 2. Participants in the interviews are referred to as 'research participants' or 'informants'; participants in the co-inquiries are referred to as 'co-researchers'. The next section explains the rationale for selecting this research approach.

3.1.1 Nature of the research

The nature of this inquiry is interpretive and constructivist (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), because it is concerned with perspectives and discourses on citizenship, actual lived experiences of citizenship, and how people interpret these to construct meaning. Interpretative research draws on the ontology and epistemology of phenomenology and hermeneutics in two significant ways that are important for this research. First, it finds that social reality is experienced differently according to context. How people interpret their reality and adapt their behaviour is influenced by the symbolic values of that context (Benton and Craib, 2001). Secondly, knowledge involves the construction of meaning. Interpretivists hold that 'knowledge consists not in the experience itself but in grasping the sense of this experience' (Fay, 1996, p.27). This research seeks to understand the social reality of citizenship from the perspective of those who experience it, in their context; and to recognise that in the process of exploring their citizenship, the co-researchers are constructing meaning together. Reflexivity becomes of central importance, requiring the (doctoral) researcher to consider how they are influencing this meaning making (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Qualitative research

A constructivist and interpretivist research approach to understanding citizenship calls for *qualitative* research methods which interpret the social world using words rather than quantification, and in terms of processes and relationships (Bryman, 2012). I have therefore focused on qualitative research methods in this inquiry. A standard qualitative research method for data collection is the semi-structured interview, which I have adopted to gather perspectives on the policy context with a total of twenty key informants at national (Nicaragua) and local levels (Nicaragua, England), in response to a lack of reliable available evidence from secondary sources.

The focus of this inquiry is the lived experience of citizens living in marginalised neighbourhoods. This has an ethical dimension (discussed in 3.6), as well as presenting challenges around how to reach and

engage research participants (3.3), and dilemmas around what kind of involvement might be of value to them. Further, because this research is constructivist and interpretivist, it is helpful to use research methods that acknowledge different ways of knowing, and which enable participants to surface and reflect on experiences and emotions that are 'felt' as well as those which are 'known' and therefore more easily articulated. Such methods are typically part of participatory action research approaches.

Participatory action research

I have chosen to situate the community-level research in a participatory action research (PAR) paradigm. PAR is research that is conducted *with* people, rather than 'on' people (Bradbury-Huang, 2010), and understood to be connected to action of some kind, that may contribute to individual and collective learning, emancipation or social change (Brydon-Miller, 2008; Bradbury and Reason, 2008; Burns, 2014). As such, PAR brings a critical dimension to the constructivist approach described above (Kincheloe, 2005). It is a broad paradigm that encompasses a wide range of methods and histories, drawing on the work of liberation theorists and pedagogues Paolo Freire (1970) and Orlando Fals Borda (2001), development practitioners Rajesh Tandon (2008) and Robert Chambers (1997), philosophers and pragmatists Habermas (1987) and Dewey (1927), to name just a few. PAR emphasises collaboration within marginalized communities and works to address the underlying causes of inequality (Banks *et al,* 2013; Williams and Brydon-Miller, 2004, p.245). The researcher is deeply engaged with the research participants as co-researchers who engage in all stages of the research process, including data analysis. Action is an expected outcome of the process. Participatory data is often qualitative and visual/creative methods are often employed, but data may also be quantitative (Holland, 2013).

This approach is appropriate for my own inquiry into the experiences of citizenship working with people living in marginalised settings because: i) it provides an approach to developing knowledge which prioritises an ethics of engagement throughout the research process; and ii) because it creates spaces for dialogue and reflection in which citizenship can be debated and potentially exercised. It is fitting that research into citizenship and its lived, enacted and participatory aspects, should require the researcher herself to commit to a participatory approach – scholars of participation may often not practise what they preach (Teedon, 2012).

Participatory research ethics

Research that is concerned with experiences of citizenship in settings where people may feel disenfranchised or unserved by the state (Kabeer and Kabir, 2009; Holston, 2009; Ballard, 2014), has ethical and political dimensions to consider. Critical theorists contend that researchers should be judged 'in terms of their political and emancipatory effects, rather than simply the extent to which

they portray and explain the social world of participants' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p.7). I have tried to navigate the challenge of researching for a thesis that is fundamentally for my own professional advancement. I have tried to develop a methodological approach that, on one hand provides robust data to explore and analyse the complexity of human beings' situated experiences of citizenship and the dynamics and processes that shape them; and on the other hand supports the research participants to use the co-research process to achieve their own personal and collective goals.

The collective, group dimension is important: Habermas (1984, 1987) argues that 'truth' becomes manifest when people explore together the validity of a range of truths or 'propositions'. They do this through what Habermas calls 'communicative action', through which participants discuss and come to an *intersubjective* understanding and agreement about what actions to take. These conversations take place in 'communicative spaces' that play a critical role when people experience 'boundary crises' in their everyday lives (Kemmis, 2008, p.123). I have attempted to create 'communicative spaces' in this research process, in which citizens can share their experiences, enter into dialogue, and develop knowledge and ideas for future action.

Key to the emancipatory potential of PAR is that it recognises that there are multiple ways of knowing, that people who experience an issue have important and relevant knowledge that they can bring to researching it, and that learning takes place in the interaction of theory and practice (praxis). Heron and Reason's (2008, p.367) 'extended epistemology' identifies four ways of knowing in PAR: propositional ('conceptual') knowing - the form which dominates academic research; experiential ('felt') knowing; presentational ('symbolized') knowing; and practical ('how to') knowing. PAR theory suggests that these different ways of knowing can be accessed through using a range of methods, including visual and embodied, and through cycles of action and reflection (see 3.2).

PAR is a tall order for a doctoral research project, and creates some tensions between the expectations and procedures of academic research, which are largely based on positivist research traditions, and the principles of PAR. I have tried to navigate a path between, and in the process I have had to compromise on some aspects of PAR. I am however mindful that there is no such thing as a perfect PAR process, and I will attempt to explain in this chapter how and why I adapted a PAR approach to fit with the practical, logistical, temporal and ethical limitations of the PhD process and my own abilities.

3.1.2 Comparative research and a post-colonial lens

This research involves two very different contexts in which people experience and exercise citizenship (see 3.7). Comparative policy research seeks out similarities, variables which are found to be common across different settings, and which can be compared. As Pollitt & Bouckaert (2011, p.23) observe,

'the problem with local detail, of course, is that, however illuminating by itself, it is just local detail. International comparison is not possible or meaningful unless *some* features can be identified which are sufficiently common to be compared across boundaries'. The challenge is to interpret meaning within and between the two settings to produce knowledge that is meaningful. Comparative analysis calls for particular care in interpreting meaning and nuance (Hantrais, 2009; Freeman, 2009). This is made more complex when comparison straddles both linguistic and cultural divides, and global North and South country settings with different experiences of colonialism, nation-building and poverty (Kennett 2008).

People's expressions of themselves as citizens are communicated in their own language, and have to be interpreted, which requires translating concepts and navigating linguistic and cultural divides. Translation is therefore a core concept for post-colonial scholars, as it contains both the risk of defining (colonial) subjects from the perspective of the 'Western' researcher, but also 'the possibility of redefining and resisting; 'of "talking back" to dominant understandings - of taking back the possibility of self-naming' (Lendvai and Bainton, 2013, p.119). A degree of translation takes place within each research site, as people try to understand and interpret their own and each other's realities. In the Bristol case there are cultural and linguistic differences to navigate between the Somali-born participants; white British and black British participants. The meaning of 'citizen' to each of them may be significantly different.

Cross-national interpretation is even more challenging. Venn (2006, cited in Lendvai and Bainton, 2013, p.120) cautions that translation can be a colonization practice which embeds a neoliberal discourse. To avoid imposing the framing of a dominant culture, the conceptual comparison needs to be emergent and negotiated, constructing an 'equivalence of meaning' (*ibid*: pp.121-122). In this way, a 'mutual intelligibility' (Santos, 2014, p.58) can emerge rather than striving to force ideas into preconceived categories which limit the potential for new knowledge to be generated. Where possible, this comparative study seeks mutual intelligibility between the sites, recognising and respecting that concepts are necessarily contextual but are entry points for seeking to create new connections (Kennett, 2001). We may learn more about our own contextualised concepts and realities when we see them though the gaze of others. In this comparative inquiry, I expected *differences* to be apparent, yet I also approached this research anticipating that the PAR approach would enable resonance and dialogue within and between the sites.

In the comparative analysis and writing up phases of the research, it is important to avoid assumptions of equivalence, as these may lead to overlooking nuanced differences in how ideas are understood in context (Kennett, 2001; Hantrais, 2004; May, 2008). The advantage of combining comparative policy

analysis with the participatory processes, is that this approach enables both a careful reading of each context, and a deep and extended iterative process of data generation and collective reflection and analysis. Interpretations can thus be checked back with the participants themselves to minimise distortions by the researcher. When translating ideas where there is no exact equivalence, conceptual equivalence is sought with the aid of creative methods (Hantrais, 2009; Larkin *et al*., 2007; Lendvai and Bainton, 2013).

3.1.3 Research Questions

Table 1 (below) sets out the sub-questions developed for each of the core research questions, and which informed the semi-structured interviews. The shaded boxes indicate the questions that guided the documentary analysis, key informant interviews and the analysis of findings. Questions 3-5 are phrased in the first and second person because they are framed for personal reflection in the digital storytelling process.

Table 1: Research questions and nested sub-questions

Research Questions	**Sub-questions**
RQ1: What is understood as citizenship by the state and how is it operationalised in this context?	1. How do policies frame citizenship rights and practices? Do policy discourses construct citizens in terms of rights? What kind of citizenship is constructed?
	2. What are the institutional spaces for citizen participation? What kind of citizen agency is enabled?
RQ2: What is the lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in this marginalised setting?	3. When and how do I feel like a citizen? When do I feel excluded?
	4. What gives me a sense of identity and belonging?
	5. What aspects of my identity inform my citizenship?
RQ3: What are the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua?	6. How do citizens experience or contest the discourses and spaces of citizenship?
	7. Through what alternative discourses and spaces do people generate a sense of citizenship?
	8. What do people understand by 'citizenship', and what makes them feel that they are 'acting' as citizens?

The participatory approach adopted in the co-inquiry meant that the specific research questions and analytical themes were discussed and developed with the co-researchers. However, while it was

important to keep the theme of citizenship open, I also entered the research relationship with an idea of some themes that seemed important to me to investigate, based on my reading of the relevant literature. In the first research meeting with the inquiry groups I introduced the aim and objectives of my research project, which of course influenced the direction of the discussion, but I then encouraged the participants to generate their own questions and reflections, using my own questions to prompt or problematise, where required.

The research questions cover a wide area of inquiry with multiple strands, calling for a multi-method research design. A challenge in researching how governmentality and agency operate is to find methodologies that bring into focus the invisible, as well as the hidden and visible, power relationships that mediate people's sense of their own agency and their encounters with mechanisms of governance (Lukes, 1974; Hayward, 2000; Hayward and Lukes, 2008). These relationships are situated in places where citizens as social agents live their daily lives, and navigate social norms, political culture and a range of associated inequalities. Therefore, to understand the experience of a marginalized citizen requires a 'situated gaze', working with contextualised knowledge and situated imaginations (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002).

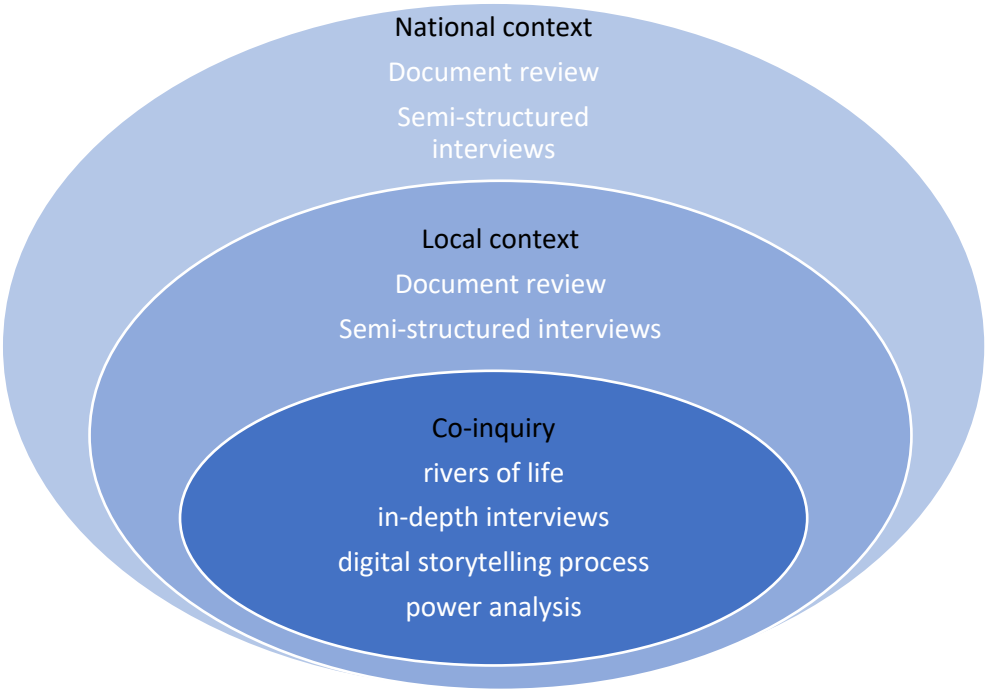
Engaging with invisible power means engaging with the internalisation of power relations, the control that we exert over our own actions through our bodies. Foucault (1991b) suggests that our own embodied experience is a form of knowledge that itself creates 'discursive practices' that define what is normal or deviant. As Pettit (2016, p.96) observes: 'The body is thus central to the (re)production of power. This poses a challenge to rational–objectivist notions of cognition, agency and choice – where thought precedes and determines action – and casts doubt on liberal notions of citizen engagement'. To understand how a sense of citizenship is generated, the research methods need to access and make explicit the identities, roles and relationships that shape agency and the interactions between individuals, communities, state and society. The choice of methods and research design are discussed in the next section.

3.2 Research design and methods

This section is concerned with how the research approach outlined in section 3.1 is operationalised into a research design. The research strategy was designed to enable individual (first person), group (second person) and inter-group (third person) reflection using a co-inquiry approach (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006). In this section I describe the research design, and the methods used: a combination

of documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, and a participatory co-inquiry process. Figure 1 (below) shows how these methods are nested and relate to different foci or levels of inquiry. The participatory co-inquiry process is at the heart of this research. It includes methods such as drawing, mapping, photography and digital storytelling as both investigative and analytical tools, to explore and critically reflect on ideas and issues through non-written, creative media as well as textual. The interviews conducted with each co-researcher, are a hybrid between qualitative in-depth interviews and the less structured and longer life history and are situated in the qualitative and ethnographic tradition. The co-inquiry is situated and contextualised through the analysis of data collected on the local and national contexts through qualitative (non-participatory) research methods: document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Figure 1: Research design levels and methods



The rest of this section discusses the rationale for selecting each of these methods, and makes a case for how they fit together. It is summarised in Table 2, below. The methods are discussed according to the 'level' of the inquiry: Documentary review and semi-structured interviews are discussed as methods for data collection at the national and local context levels; Individual in-depth interviews/life histories and the Co-inquiry are discussed for engaging with individuals and groups at the community or 'ground' level. Co-inquiry is a methodology which can adopt a range of research methods, according to the context and research question to be addressed. Its defining features are that it involves first- and second-person research, that this takes place through cycles, and that these cycles involve reflexivity. The methods adopted need to enable these features. Section 3.2.2 explains the rationale

for selecting the specific participatory and creative methods of 'Rivers of Life', storytelling, and power analysis.

Table 2: Rationale for Research Activities

Activity	Purpose	Theoretical basis
Individual Story-telling River of Life Digital stories	To create a narrative of participants' lives through both word-based and visual forms (drawing, photos etc)	Multi-media process enables participants to access and communicate embodied knowledge (performative) as well as practical and propositional (Heron & Reason, 2008)
Iterative group sharing, discussion & critical reflection	To identify resonances, dissonances and locus of power in the stories.	Stories carry emotion through which people engage with each other & build solidarities Dialogue and reflection enable 'double loop learning' (Argyris & Schon, 1978); engage participants in sense-making/ interpretation of data (Burns, 2014)
In-depth interviews/ life histories	To develop stories further and stimulate reflection	Life histories support the participation of marginalised people in research; enable reflection on drivers of inequalities and interaction of these in their lives (Goodson & Sikes, 2001)
Semi-structured interviews with key informants	To contextualise the participatory data To provide perception data to complement secondary data for documentary analysis	Semi-structured interviews elicit information around pre-established variables (Berg, 2007)
Document review	To contextualise the participatory data To analyse how ideas about citizenship are communicated	Linguistic approach (Delanty & Strydom, 2003) to policy analysis looks for particular narratives and vocabularies (Bryman, 2012).

3.2.1 National and local policy contexts

Document analysis of secondary data, academic and grey literature review

To explore how the state understands and operationalises citizenship (i.e. RQ1, see Table 1), I reviewed relevant government policies, and the academic literature and policy research reports

available in each context. This literature provided context to the in-depth study conducted through the co-inquiry. Documentary review is in the tradition of the 'linguistic turn' in social science (Delanty and Strydom, 2003), which analyses policy by looking for particular narratives and vocabularies (Bryman, 2012). Policy documents are communicative devices, and document analysis requires applying a critical lens to how language is used to construct ideas, and brings a critique of ideology and power to data analysis (Flick, 2006). The use of published policies, as well as secondary data such as policy analysis conducted by think tanks and academic institutes in Nicaragua and the UK, enabled me to build a picture of the relevant policies and their impacts in each setting.

The key data collection method for this exercise was to identify policies, discourses and policy-relevant publications relating to citizenship in each context. This was largely desk-based. The sub-questions (see Table 1) explored with this method were: *How do policies frame citizenship rights and practices? What are the institutional spaces for citizen participation*? These questions generated *a priori* themes which were refined during my reading of the wider literature and development of the research design, and which were applied in the analysis stage.

Semi-structured interviews with key informants

Semi-structured interviews enable a guided conversation between researcher and informant, to elicit information on particular topics in a systematic way, allowing for some prompting and reordering during the interview, to ensure the flow of the conversation (Berg, 2007; Bryman, 2012). Interview schedules with question prompts for the semi-structured interviews with key informants were developed to elicit information around pre-established variables (Berg, 2007). These themes or variables were developed from the sub-questions.

Interview schedules were prepared in English and translated into Spanish, with some adjustments in emphasis according to sector i.e. state or non-state actors (see Appendix A1). Given the small number of interviews, I piloted the schedule by testing it out with a trusted potential respondent familiar with the research in each site. I validated the schedule with them for relevance and sense, and in Nicaragua also my use of Spanish (Berg, 2007). I made some small adjustments, but found that the schedule had worked sufficiently well in this first interview, to include it in the research data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

At national level, in Nicaragua there is a relative lack of policy literature or published government policies relating to citizenship, and for that reason I supplemented the literature in this context with semi-structured interviews (see 3.3 below). I did not conduct national level interviews in England, since I was able to access sufficient published reports, policy documents and academic literature.

At local level, the analysis of government policies was supplemented by key informant interviews at in both sites (Matagalpa and Bristol), in order to understand how local stakeholders interpret these policies. These interviews were necessary to understand better the local political culture and to understand how political rationalities at the national level percolate to the local.

In-depth interviews/life histories

I conducted in-depth interviews with each of the participants of the co-inquiry groups, in both sites. These extended interviews were designed in the tradition of the life history, to provide insight into the person's perspective on their experiences, and their narrative about themselves in terms of agency, strategies, aspirations, barriers and turning points. The aim of these lightly prompted narrative interviews was to aid the participatory storytelling process (see next section), to provide context and depth to the digital stories, and to stimulate more reflection on the personal, social and political context of their stories. Life history interviews contribute to building a 'thick' description which enables interpretation of context (Geertz, 1973). They also support the participation of marginalised people in research and enable reflection on the drivers of inequalities and the interaction of these in the interviewees' lives (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). The openness of this method is important as the research was not based on a tight pre-determined hypothesis of citizenship, to provide space for participants to articulate their own ideas about their citizenship during the interview. Moreover, these loosely-structured in-depth interviews enable a dynamic between researcher and participant that is of close and collaborative 'interaction partners' (Kelly, 2010), as the former gently prompts the latter to develop their story. This collaboration allows for both parties to be reflexive and learn during the research encounter (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007; Worcester, 2012).

3.2.2 Individual and group inquiry as a process of co-inquiry

The theoretical underpinnings of participatory action research suggest that individuals can engage in research in a group setting and develop new understandings about their realities, through dialogue and reflection together (Ledwith and Springett, 2010). The co-inquiry approach sits within this PAR tradition and conceptualises the inquiry process as a process of knowledge production that is grounded in real life experience, articulated through stories, understood through theories, and expressed through actions (Oates 2002). The most developed version of co-inquiry is cooperative inquiry which is designed as a process of reflection through which participants research into their own lives in cooperation with others, through mutual questioning and reflection, opening up possibilities for change (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 2001; Eyben, 2009). Co-inquiry is considered to be an ideal method for inquiring into invisible norms and structures because of the cycles of individual and

collective reflection (Eyben, 2009). Thus, it has a good fit with the governmentality and agency analytical framework I have adopted for this research.

There are four important features of co-inquiry which are relevant to my research, and which I will discuss in turn in this section. These are: i) first person research; ii) second person research; iii) a process of iterative cycles; and iv) communicative space.

First person research

'First-person' research (Reason and Torbert, 2001) is an introspective process to understand one's own experience (Howard and Vajda, 2016). It involves taking an inquiring approach to one's own life, practice and value system. It recognizes the *experiential* knowledge of the individual inquirer as the primary source of knowledge, which is facilitated and shared through participatory narrative, visual or embodied methods that engage with emotions as well as ideas. This knowledge forms a link between inward and outward experiences of being. It therefore lends itself to this research which is linking the inward experience of 'being' with the outward experience of 'being a citizen' and interacting with others in the social world and public sphere.

Second person research

A defining feature of co-inquiry is that individuals are brought into an active relationship with each other in a context of cooperation (Heron 1996). Second person inquiry brings individual inquiry into a group process of dialogue and collective analysis, in which peers listen to each other, offer their perceptions and interpretations, and the group analyses how these interpretations fit within the boundaries of the inquiry (Torbert, 2006; Greenwood and Levin, 2007). This group reflection creates a dialectic process through which it is possible to surface norms which had been invisible to us (e.g. stereotypes), and to reassess what we understand as valid or true (Scott-Villiers, 2009). Finally, *third*-person research brings the group's inquiry into dialogue with wider communities (see Step 7 in section 3.4).

Iterative cycles

Co-inquiry requires a cycle of activities that enable reflexivity. Through a supported process the inquirer builds awareness of their own positionality and the socially ascribed and individually internalised positions that each inquirer occupies in their own context. This is made possible through cycles of action and reflection facilitated by methods which enable different forms of knowing to be accessed and reflected upon (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 2008), and the potential for 'double loop' learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978). The steps of the cycle undertaken in this research are described in Section 3.4.

Communicative space

The space in which the inquirers meet is critically important. The first meeting 'opens' this 'communicative space' (Kemmis, 2001; Wicks and Reason, 2009), establishing a dynamic for people to enter into dialogue and engage in a kind of social critique (e.g. Habermas, 1984). Wicks and Reason (2009, p.244) highlight the importance of building relationships at this stage, and the 'need to develop legitimacy and the capacity to convene that goes alongside it'. Initial activities need therefore to build these relationships and legitimacy. Methods also need to 'hold the space' (Senge, 2006), to enable the different forms of knowledge to be accessed, to build trust and confidence to speak, and to 'cultivate inquiry and experimentation by the deliberating group' (Quick and Sandfort 2014, p.304).

A significant disclaimer is necessary at this point. Co-inquiry is in theory 'self-directed' by the group of co-researchers (Heron, 1996). Since I was required to identify my research question in advance of fieldwork, there are limitations to facilitating such a self-directing inquiry within the framework of a PhD project. Typically, the group itself would identify the topic it wishes to research, but I had to convene a group and invite them into an inquiry that I had already specified, which limited both the level of self-direction of the group, and its action orientation. That is, if the group comes together around a question or issue they wish to address, they are more likely to be motivated into action.

Co-inquiry processes can adopt a range of research methods according to the context and the research question to be addressed. In this case, the inquiry into people's experience of their own citizenship called for creative methods that stimulated reflections on lived experience and sense of agency. I discuss these methods in the next section.

3.2.3 Co-inquiry methods

I designed the co-inquiry process to enable the four aspects outlined above, and also drawing on Ledwith and Springett's (2010) three-step approach to participatory action research. These steps are *story-telling, dialogue and critical reflection*. The extended digital storytelling process applied in this research encompasses these steps, and is explained below. The rationale behind each method is summarised in Table 2.

Storytelling

Story-telling as a research method has been revived by post-structuralists who critique metanarratives as silencing voices (Ledwith and Springett 2010, p.124). Storytelling is a way of accessing and recognising people's individual (and collective) narratives about what gives them a sense of belonging and how they make sense of themselves and their agency in relation to other actors (Ledwith and

Springett, 2010, p.103), and therefore very well-suited to this inquiry. Personal stories give insight into how the personal is revealed (or not) in the public realm, and stories of difference and marginalisation which may be silenced in the collective/public arena. Storytelling is acknowledged by some scholars of citizen participation and governance as a means of inductive research, which can enable the researcher to build a picture of what people are actually doing and how they make sense of their own action, rather than building an argument around pre-existing theorisation influenced by the researcher's own positionality. Pertinent to this research is the observation of Robins, Cornwall and Von Lieres (2008, p.1082):

> 'Any analysis of the limits and opportunities for participatory governance needs to start from particular places and issues on which citizens act, rather than with abstract notions of citizenship and participation. This requires narrating and situating stories of citizen action, and working back from these stories to explore what was going on in terms of relationships and positioning, and what understandings and analytical tools might make best sense of these forms of engagement (and whether the notion of citizenship has any place in this at all)'.

Stories can be understood as 'counternarratives'; stories of individuals, groups and communities that have been marginalized, excluded, or forgotten in the telling of official narratives (Peters and Lankshear, 2013). The methods need to draw on experiences that have physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions, and enable participants to present and analyse their experience through a range of media, from oral through to dance, drama or drawing (see Liamputtong and Rumbold, 2008). According to Pettit (2016), methods which draw on the knowledge we hold in our bodies can help to build citizenship, since power and inequality are understood and enacted through our bodies. Further, the emotion that is communicated by the story-teller can open up a personal connection and communication with diverse audiences (Wheeler, 2014). This is important in the field of citizenship studies because of the power of storytelling to communicate experience and to influence others, such as policymakers (Rhodes, 2014, Howard *et al*., 2018).

Storytelling enables inquirers to develop narratives of the self, and through the group sessions to take these narratives into a social space of second-person inquiry. The advantage of story-telling as a group process rather than the more traditional qualitative focus group method, is precisely how it cycles between first- and second-person inquiry, and the dialogue and critical reflection that is enabled. I identified two methods to facilitate the storytelling – Rivers of Life, and Digital Storytelling. The in-depth interviews (3.2.2) provided additional data and space for individual reflection.

River of Life

This method is a visual presentation of a period or aspect of the inquirer's life. It is a form of visual narrative, in which the storyteller can depict the past, the present and aspirations for the future (Ortiz-Echevarria, 2014). The idea of a river represents the flow of time, and the inquirer uses images to describe their personal journey and draws these images along the flow of the river. The process enables the storyteller to begin to craft their narrative, and to use images to represent issues or moments that can be difficult to articulate in words. Rocks, trees, tributaries and other images can represent challenges, positive moments and critical junctures. The inquirer produces a poster, which they may choose to share with the group. Sharing these posters in a group can build individual confidence and group cohesion, as it begins to surface common concerns and experiences. I therefore designed the first phase of the inquiry to include a River of Life workshop.

Digital Story Telling

Digital storytelling (DST) is a creative method through which a personal story of around three minutes is created and performed using a combination of first-person narrated voice-overs, images and sound. The method was first formalised by Joe Lambert and Dana Atchley at the Centre for Digital Storytelling in Berkley, California as a medium through which people can produce their *own* stories (Lambert, 2012; Hartley and McWilliams, 2009). It has had international take up, particularly to facilitate the voices of marginalized or stigmatized groups in community-based and international development settings (see for example Cornelius, Shahrokh and Mills, 2015).

Participants develop a story with three moments: a beginning, a middle, and an end (Lewin, 2011). This forms the story 'arc', hinging on a 'turning point' (Bruner, 1994, cited in Hull and Katz, 2006) or 'pivotal moment' (Hull and Katz, 2006). The story is edited and recorded as a voiceover. Each storyteller then creates a storyboard with images, photographs or film to accompany each line of the story. The voiceover is an important element which gives DST a performativity, and the composite of image and voiced narrative supports this performativity (Ochs and Capps, 1996; Hull and Katz, 2006).

While I had used participatory methods before, I was yet to use DST, and I was keen to test out its possibilities. I felt that the medium of the digital story was suited to a co-inquiry, given its individual and group dynamic, and could also be useful for cross-national comparative work because of the visual as well as textual elements which would make the stories in one site more readily available to others. The multi-media element is important for including participants with varying levels of literacy, as well as different learning styles and ways of knowing (Heron and Reason, 2006). Further, DST 'is frequently conceived and deployed as a tool for working towards equity and social justice, providing space for *ordinary* and often marginalised people to be heard (who otherwise might not be heard) and enabling

them to express their - often *extraordinary* – stories' (Kervin, McMahon, O'Shea and Harwood, 2014, para 4). It thus suited an inquiry into the experiences of citizenship of 'everyday' citizens living in marginalised settings.

DST has been critiqued for its emphasis on the individual and introspective, and lack of engagement with social debate and critique (Altruz, 2013; Watkins and Russo, 2009), although its use in international development settings demonstrates how it can be used to inform policy and practice on issues such as HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. To extend the story-telling process, some have incorporated theatre techniques (Alrutz, 2013); and others, power analysis (Wheeler, 2014). These forms share with participatory video a focus on process over product, and the potential to develop individual and collective confidence and agency through this process (Shaw, 2015).

Of specific relevance to this study's concern with citizenship and citizen agency, is Hull & Katz's (2006: 46) argument that the process of developing the DST narrative, together with selected images, becomes a medium for 'crafting the agentive self': that is, when people adopt 'agentive stances toward themselves and their social worlds through "recontextualization" or "recentering", and through rearticulation and realignment of selves in the digital storytelling process' (Hull & Katz 2006: 52). Moreover, it is the co-researcher/story-teller who chooses what to include, and how to represent themselves, giving them control over the editing process (Rahim 2012).

Dialogue and critical reflection

Dialogue and critical reflection are central to Freirean approaches to research, involving an iterative process of learning from experience then learning from reflection. Facilitated dialogue (Step 2 in Ledwith and Springett's PAR process) is about enabling structured conversations that allow emotion to be expressed, and 'moves and channels the energy for change' (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, p149). It involves active listening, attending to the other person as a whole person, asking open questions, not evaluating or judging what is said - 'an act of engaging within a space of mutual respect' (ibid: 147). It also requires critical reflection (Step 3 in Ledwith and Springett's process): a process through which individually held social assumptions are examined in order to make changes in the social world (Fook and Gardner, 2007). Rooted in critical theory, critical reflection is linked with careful listening and dialogue, and invites deeper thought about the premises on which the stories, actions and emotions are based (*ibid*.).

Given the extended nature of this research, I designed additional spaces for dialogue. These would open up through the sharing and discussion of the Rivers of Life; the sharing and analysis of the digital stories within the group; and then again *between* the groups. This would present the opportunity for deepening dialogue, identifying resonances and dissonances in the stories, and actively engaging

participants in sense-making and interpretation of the data (Burns, 2014), reflecting the ethics of participatory research (see 3.6). To facilitate critical reflection, I chose to conduct a power analysis in the final workshop, using Veneklasen and Miller's (2002, 2007) framework of 'expressions of power': power over, power within, power with, and power to. This framework helps to identify forms of oppression (power over), but emphasises an individual and collective agency and contestation perspective, which is important for this study. Power analysis of this kind can generate solidarities, and positive critical consciousness which combines logic and emotion (Kincheloe, 2008).

3.3 Sampling and Access

Research rigour and validity require the researcher to think carefully about the process of selecting participants. This project used purposive sampling which is a non-random form. It is used to identify participants in a deliberate and strategic way, to ensure that those who are selected are relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). This is different from 'convenience' sampling, as the participants are selected according to criteria that are carefully established with relation to the research questions (*ibid*). The strategy of purposive sampling however, needs to be managed in the context of the reality of access to respondents, discussed below.

National and local level

In Nicaragua, there is limited policy literature available, and interviews were identified as a method to address this gap. While access to civil society respondents was relatively easy due to my existing contacts, access to state officials was extremely difficult – even those who I knew personally - due to the political environment. My experience confirmed what I had been told in my first round of interviews with national civil society organisations – that politicians and civil servants cannot speak to anyone; only the President's wife is the authorised 'voice' of the government, and she speaks every day on the radio. Any state employee or representative who speaks without authorisation risks losing their job. I was able to speak with one advisor to a government ministry, and a civil servant working in central government. Both requested complete anonymity. Through the advisor I was granted a brief conversation with a senior politician. As these came through my personal contacts, there was some unintended 'convenience sampling'. In total, I was able to get informal interviews with 3 national government informants, and semi-structured interviews with 7 civil society informants. In England I drew on published literature and did not conduct national interviews.

At the local level, in both sites I conducted semi-structured interviews with staff of 3 local organisations active in the neighbourhoods where I was conducting the fieldwork, and with 2 key staff

concerned with citizen participation in each of the respective local authorities. In Matagalpa, I approached the local authority a number of times with requests for interview, with no success. I tried to access the leadership through personal contacts, and finally was able interview two members of the municipal family cabinet. Interviewees received a project information sheet (Appendix A2) in advance, and at the start of the interview were invited to ask questions, and to sign a consent form (Appendix A4).

Table 3: List of research participants

Site Nicaragua/N England/E	Code	National: (Nicaragua only)	Code	Local: Matagalpa -M Bristol -B
N	NCS1	Academic and coordinator of national civil society coalition	LCS1-M	Coordinator of local civil society organisation
N	NGov1	National civil servant	LCS2-M	Deputy coordinator of local civil society organisation
N	NGov2	National government advisor	LCS3-M	Director, local civil society organisation
N	NGov3	Senior politician	LGov1-M	Sandinista youth representative in Family Cabinet
N	NCS2	Director of national research institute	LGov2-M	Coordinator of Family Cabinet
N	NCS3	Academic and member of national civil society organisation		
N	NCS4	Director of national civil society organisation		
N	NCS5	Director of national training organisation		
N	NCS6	Ex-coordinator of social movement		
N	NCS7	Coordinator of social movement		
E			LCS1-B	Director, city-wide civil society organisation
E			LCS2-B	Director, community-based civil society organisation
E			LGov1-B	Senior civil servant in City Council
E			LGov2-B	Civil servant, city council
E			LCS3-B	Academic and local resident

Selection of sites

The focus of this research is the experiences of citizenship of people living in marginalised neighbourhoods of an English and a Nicaraguan city. The selection of sites sought some equivalence in terms of their size and socio-economic relevance in their respective countries. Both Bristol and

Matagalpa are urban settings, and principle/core cities in a rural region. Matagalpa is the fourth largest city, and Bristol the sixth, and both have growing populations and marked spatial inequality. The neighbourhoods selected for this study experience high levels of deprivation (Matagalpa does not have a breakdown of deprivation by neighbourhood, but the selected neighbourhoods are all in the deprived south-west periphery; the selected area in Bristol is in the most deprived ward in the city).

Matagalpa

The municipality of Matagalpa has a population of 150,643, according to government estimates in June 2012 (Instituto Nacional de Información sobre el Desarrollo, 2012), and which is growing at a rate of around 23% each decade (*ibid.*). Almost all *Matagalpinos* are mestizo (mix of indigenous/native Central American and white), with a small population of indigenous groups (*ibid.*). The significant population growth is primarily rural-urban migration, and the municipality is now approximately two-thirds urban, in a predominantly rural and mountainous region. It is the capital of the department (region) of Matagalpa, in the north of the country. It is the fourth largest city in Nicaragua but considered to be the most commercially important after Managua, the capital. The local industries are coffee, beef, cacao and vegetables for domestic and international production. Despite the commercial importance of the region, 18.5% of the population are considered 'vulnerable to poverty', and a further 7% are in severe poverty (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute, 2017). The city council of Matagalpa had been held by right wing parties since 1989, until elections in 2008 which brought in a Sandinista mayor and government. The participants in this research all live in neighbourhoods in the periphery of the city; these are neighbourhoods which lack surfaced roads and in some cases, inadequate sewerage and access to water is at a standpipe.

Bristol

Bristol is the eighth largest city in England and Wales, with a population estimated at 454,200 (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Like Matagalpa, it is the commercial centre of the region, and has a fast-growing population at a rate of 11.2% (Bristol City Council, 2017a). It is ethnically diverse, and the percentage of non 'white British' residing in the city has grown from 12 to 22% in a decade (*ibid*). The Somali population is estimated at around 10,000 although Somali is not a category in the census (*ibid*). Bristol is divided into 34 wards, each with two elected councillors. The area where this research was conducted is the most deprived ward in Bristol and in the poorest 10% nationally (Bristol City Council 2017b). Its population of 18,400 includes the highest proportion of children under 16, at 26.7%, and between 40-50% of children living in low-income families (*ibid*). Fifty percent of the population lives in social rented housing (compared to 20% average across Bristol). The local authority of 70 councillors is led by a Labour directly elected mayor, elected in 2016.

Establishing the Inquiry Group

In Bristol, I visited an organisation active in the selected neighbourhood, to discuss the research with them. I knew of the organisation and but had not worked with them before. They invited me to use their training room to hold the meetings, and asked if a member of their staff could attend in order to learn about the method. This staff member was a great help as she was able to provide logistical support and some co-facilitation. The organisation allowed me to send out the invitation to participate in the research via their community organiser, to gain their consent for me to phone or visit them to discuss the research further.

In Matagalpa, I was supported by Joel Zuniga, a trusted friend and former colleague. He assisted me in contacting local organisations. I prepared an introductory letter which Joel sent on my behalf, and followed up with a personal visit to talk through any questions. I approached three organisations - I had worked with one of the key organisations before and was well known to them, so to avoid bias, I reached out to two additional organisations I had not previously worked with. It was important for Joel to make a personal visit to explain the research and to allay any concerns about participation. The political climate in Nicaragua discourages critique of government policy, and the independence and confidentiality of this research needed to be clarified.

In both sites, the research invitation was framed in terms of taking part in a *participatory* process to explore experiences, reflections and ideas about what it is to be a citizen in the community where they live (Appendix A3). The sample was purposive, as I wanted to research the experiences of people who met certain characteristics: live in an urban setting; live in a low-income neighbourhood; adults; some experience of engaging with a local organisation or service but not necessarily community activists. I wanted to recruit people who were not 'the usual suspects' of community participation, because I was interested in ‘ordinary’ citizens (Neveu, 2015), the ‘everyday makers’ (Davies, 2013; Bang, 2005) who are more likely to be excluded or self-exclude from standard mechanisms for citizen engagement. I aimed to work with a mixed cohort but did not try to create a group that was representative of the general population. It was important to be clear at the invitation stage that they could choose to be identified and fully credited as co-researchers, or could remain anonymous in all project outputs, should they wish to do so. We revisited this periodically, which was important because of the kind of data we were producing (i.e. audio-visual that could not easily be anonymised), and people needed to be able to reassess if they wanted to share their stories, and in which spaces (see 3.6 Ethics, see also introduction to Chapter Five). Again, Joel held preliminary meetings with groups of individuals in Matagalpa who had expressed an interest in the research, to talk them through the invitation and its implications.

Table 4: Inquiry group members

Site (Matagalpa/Bristol)	Characteristics (Sex, approx. age)	Inquiry Group pseudonym
Matagalpa	F, 54	Lola
Matagalpa	F, 30	Rosa
Matagalpa	F, 32	Carolina
Matagalpa	F, 49	Maria
Matagalpa	M, 23	Bartolo
Matagalpa	F, 32	Ximena
Matagalpa	F, 26	(Sara)
Matagalpa	F, 50	(Blanca)
Bristol	M, 70+	Colin
Bristol	M, 60+	Alfie
Bristol	F, 40	Samira
Bristol	F, 31	Emilia
Bristol	M, 70+	Jack
Bristol	F, 25	(Hana)
Bristol	F, 30	(Leila)

In both sites, participation dropped slightly after the first full research meeting (indicated by names in brackets), even though everyone who attended was active and engaged during the session. All the participants who came to the second meeting stayed for the rest of the process. In the Nicaraguan site, it was very difficult to recruit men to the research. Two men who initially agreed to join, failed to turn up to the first meeting, and again to a subsequent 'catch up' meeting I organised. It was explained to me by a staff member of one of the local organisations, that one had been on a drinking binge, and the other was a school teacher who had gone to the funeral of a fellow teacher who had been brutally murdered a few days earlier. I tried again, and through Joel's contacts I was able to recruit a young man to the group, and we held a one-to-one catch up session with him. As a result, the first workshop of the DST process in Nicaragua was attended by seven women (two later dropped out because of work commitments), and the final group comprised one man and five women. The man was in his early twenties, a university student and activist. In Bristol, three men and four women attended the first meeting. The three men were all over 60, and stayed the course. Three of the four women were Somali, and two of them dropped out, one after the first meeting, and the other after the second meeting, possibly because of the combination of language and childcare challenges. I could not offer Somali interpretation, and while all the women spoke some English, the two who dropped out were

less confident. Also, although the local organisation provided a free crèche during our research meetings which was used by both women who stayed in the group, these mothers may have been less comfortable leaving their young children at the crèche.

This experience reflects a common difficulty in recruiting working age men to community-related activities. During the recruitment period, I asked people's preferences for daytime or evening meetings in order not to exclude people in work, but almost all preferred daytime. The free crèche was an important resource for the Bristol group, and enabled two women to attend the sessions who might not otherwise have stayed in the group. One of the women in the Matagalpa group brought her daughter with her to most of the meetings, which took place in the afternoon when school and work commitments were finished. The groups were not representative of the local community, but neither was this my objective.

I am also mindful of who might be excluded from a participatory research process. They may self-exclude because of fear of discrimination or language barrier; they may not have time; or they may not have access because they do not have a connection with any of the community organisations I approached. Participants were asked to commit to 'a one-to-one interview, and then six 2-hour workshops between September 2015 and May 2016' (see Appendix A3), which is a significant time commitment and could rule out people for reasons of work, caring commitments, health and mobility issues.

3.4 The research process

The fieldwork process ran from March 2015 to May 2016, with work alternating between Nicaragua and England. The process in Nicaragua was spaced across three visits (March 2015, July-August 2015, and March 2016), while the process in England was more evenly spaced with meetings every 4-6 weeks from June 2015 to May 2016 (Appendix A13). During the process, I maintained contact with the co-researchers via text message or social media (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). Given that the co-inquiry stretched over a year in each site, the challenge was to keep people engaged using a method (DST) that is generally used over a week's intensive workshop. I had been advised that it would be very challenging to manage over a more protracted period with the risk of a drop-off in attendance (Wheeler, pers. comm.). I therefore built the DST process into a broader process, using additional participatory and qualitative methods to complement the DST data collection process, and to build and maintain communication within and between the groups. The following sections describe the four

phases of the fieldwork undertaken: 1) Investigating the context; 2) Initiating the co-inquiry; 3) the core DST process; and 4) Collective analysis.

Phase 1: Investigating the context

I began by collecting relevant policy documents, reports and literature available online. I conducted seven national and three local level semi-structured interviews during my first visit to Nicaragua (May 2015), to get a good understanding of the context before beginning the co-inquiry process. Details of sampling and access were reported in Section 3.3. I conducted five interviews with local key informants in Bristol and two additional local interviews in Matagalpa between July 2015 and April 2016. The interviews broadly followed the key informant interview schedule (Appendix A1), but I allowed flexibility for the interviewees to elaborate more, according to their motivations and experiences. These interviews were selective, according to where I became aware of gaps in the secondary data available as the research unfolded. For example, in Matagalpa I sought an interview with a young person who had been in the role of Sandinista Youth representative in the municipal Family Cabinet, in order to better understand its functioning. These interviews contributed to my understanding of the context, and also provided data that was analysed to enhance the interpretation of documents and to respond to the question of how citizenship is constructed and operationalised by the state in the two settings (see Chapter Four for a full discussion). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded in N Vivo.

Phase 2: Initiating the co-inquiry

The co-inquiries were conducted as a series of workshops. For each session, I designed a detailed session plan (Appendix A13). The first meeting of the co-inquiry group in each site aimed to build trust and a sense of connection between us, in order to 'open the communicative space'. I brought to this my own experience of facilitation and of convening 'safe spaces' for co-producing knowledge (Howard, Flores and Hambleton, 2015). I tried to make the space comfortable, and provided drinks and snacks, and time for informal interaction. At the first meeting, I explained the process and the proposed methods, and we brainstormed the broad topic of citizenship to elicit interest and expectations, and to surface ideas about citizenship and to establish some boundaries of what would be possible to explore within this process. In Matagalpa, I clarified that I was not going to teach the legal rights and responsibilities of citizens under Nicaraguan law, since some had come with this expectation, because of such workshops they had heard about delivered by NGOs. In this initial brainstorm around citizenship, I elicited ideas from the groups about what they considered to be

aspects of citizenship, and we had an initial discussion about what factors make us feel more, or less, like a citizen. This enabled a preliminary surfacing of people's perceptions of intersectional differences with relation to citizenship, for example of gender, age and economic status.

At this meeting, we also discussed and agreed some 'ground rules', to establish shared ethical principles on how the research process should be conducted and to establish a 'safe space' for sharing knowledge. It is important to build in collaborative decision-making to establish our shared ethics at the start, and to refer back to these during the research process (Brydon-Miller, 2008, 2012; Banks et al., 2013). I also introduced icebreaker activities in this first meeting and in subsequent meetings. Icebreakers are activities which are fun, involve some physical activity, and help to establish trust and a collaborative environment. Duncan and Ridley-Duff (2014) suggest that icebreakers also encourage personal disclosure, and that activities can move over time from superficial towards sharing more personal information. Icebreakers can also serve to stimulate thinking in a certain way, for example, I used a visual game (picture lotto - *'La Chalupa'*) before we started the digital storytelling process.

Rivers of life

In the following workshop, I introduced the first research activity, which aimed to deepen the reflection on citizenship and link it to identities, through drawing 'rivers of life'. The drawing exercise was prompted by the research sub-question (see Table 1): 'When have I felt like a citizen? When have I felt excluded?' This was on the surface a fun exercise that introduced the visual dimension to the group, and the first activity of working individually, and sharing with the group. The activity contributed to opening the communicative space, but also linked to the visual and narrative story-telling that would come next, by encouraging people to represent their lives as a series of images, through the metaphor of a river. Once all had drawn their rivers, participants took turns to explain their drawing to the others. I emphasised that the group would not question or criticise, only bear witness to the presenter's experience.

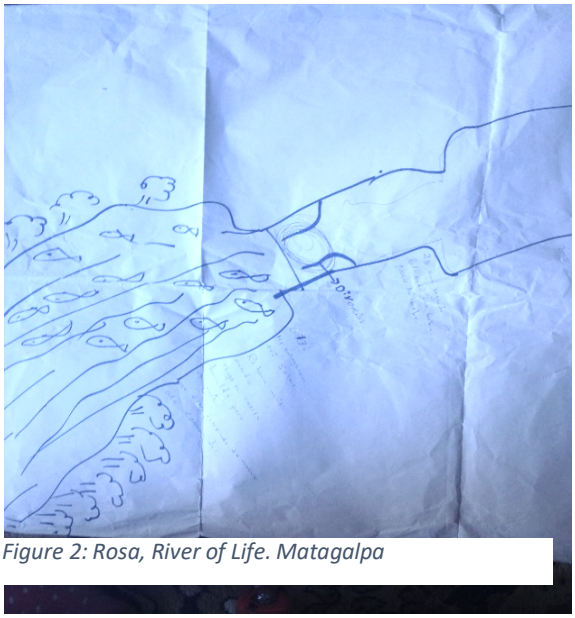


Figure 2: Rosa, River of Life. Matagalpa

At the session in Matagalpa, only women participated, and they opened up to a remarkable degree about their lives. The first to present was a young woman who talked about her experience of domestic violence in her childhood, and her openness set the tone for others to talk openly. The women shared how they valued the opportunity to talk about experiences that they do not usually discuss in their everyday lives.

In Bristol, there was also remarkable depth in some of the stories, but the process was more disjointed as not everyone finished their maps, and so we were not able to present back in a circle. We finished the maps in smaller groups, and it was in one of these sessions that an interesting dialogue between very different cultural experiences emerged. In both sites, as the co-researchers began to speak with a greater degree of openness, allowing themselves to be little more vulnerable, they were building trust.

Figure 3: Samira, River of Life. Bristol

Samira shared how, after telling us her 'River of Life' story about her escape from the war in Somalia, she then told her story to her daughter, *for the first time*. Her daughter was studying the Second World War and the evacuation of children in Britain. After having shared her story in the workshop, Samira felt able to tell the story of her own experience of war to her daughter.

Telling her story and receiving affirmation from the group, strengthened her voice and the sense that she had a story that deserved to be heard. Samira also made connections between her own story and Jack's experience of being evacuated during the Second World War. They shared a common experience of wartime separation from the family, fear, and a lack of control over their world.

This method enabled participants to begin to explore aspects of their own identities that they related to citizenship. At the same time, they were listening carefully to each other's accounts of their lives, which began building solidarities that at times crossed cultural boundaries, as in the example of Samira and Jack. The exercise was also designed to generate ideas for their digital stories. The focus on a particular moment, and locating this in the flow of their lives, helped participants to begin to see a 'story moment' that could be developed in the next phase of the research. In the in-depth interviews, we also used the river of life pictures as a prompt for discussion.

In-depth interviews/ life histories

In parallel to the co-inquiry workshops, I conducted in-depth informal interviews with the co-inquiry participants in each site. This helped to build my rapport with them and provided additional space in which to surface and reflect on their experiences of citizenship. Free flowing and open, these interviews were guided with a few prompting questions to invite the participant to reflect on their lives from the perspective of citizenship, but otherwise allowing them to take the conversation in the directions opened up by their own reflections. These prompting questions were developed from the research sub-questions, especially 3, 4, 5 and 8 (see Table 1).

I used the prompts to encourage them to reflect on key episodes in their lives, referring to the River of Life they had drawn, and inviting more depth and identification of moments of change (turning points): 'tell me about your aspirations'; 'is there a particular moment when things changed?'. These turning points were useful for identifying material for the digital stories. The interview also encouraged reflection on aspects of place-based and relationship-based belonging and touched on the concept of power with relation to citizenship. The interview prompts were grouped into four broad sections (Appendix A10): 'identity', 'belonging', 'power and empowerment', and 'relationships'. The interviews generated rich data, and only in one case was there resistance to looking back, by a participant who chose not to talk about his past further back than a few years in the interview, or in his digital story. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded in N Vivo.

Phase 3: The core digital story-telling process

The next workshop initiated the digital storytelling, for which I designed a seven-step process. The first five steps draw on resources from the Transformative Story website and the BBC Capture Wales website. Steps six and seven are my own, enriched by discussions with Lewin, Shahrokh and Wheeler (pers. comms.). The seven steps are summarised in Table 5. The process alternated between whole

group sessions, and individual/pair work activities. I recorded all the group sessions, since the discussions themselves would constitute data, and in the latter sessions, collective data analysis. I had the Nicaraguan sessions transcribed in Spanish and worked with the Spanish transcripts (see 3.5).

Table 5: The Seven-step DST process

Session	Purpose	Activities
Session 1: The Gathering	Prepare participants so that they understand the digital story telling (DST) process	- Icebreaker - Short reflection (in pairs) on previous workshop - Share any key points (facilitator – emphasise observations relating to identity, citizenship) - Explain the steps in the DST process - View and discuss example digital stories - Consent and permissions - Digital cameras available
Session 2: Story Circle *Tell us about a time when you felt like you were/weren't a citizen. Why?*	Finding the story – writing a first draft of your script	- Plenary – word game (or with photos) to help stimulate descriptive language and visual images 15' - Story constructed around a theme. First person narrative - Individual: first attempt to write a few words. Tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. 15' - Group: Story circle – 30' (5 mins each) - Individual – write down the feedback, work on story again, facilitators help by asking questions – (45') - Take your story home to improve it
Session 3: Storyboard	Improve and finalize the story; design the storyboard	- Picture Lotto game for thinking visually ('*La Chalupa*') - Show participants a storyboard table to show them how to think through the distribution of images - Participants develop their storyboard - Think about images /photos (need 20-25) - Agree sharing of digital cameras – work in pairs
Session 4: Voiceover	Record the voiceover Transfer photos & images	- Individual – practice reading your story; record in one go if possible. - Bring photos - Upload onto ipads – indiv. sessions, staggered meetings
Session 5: Finalise the digital story	Edit and finish	- Edit the images to fit with the narrative - Add title - Find images for any gaps - Edit and export
Session 6: Viewing	Share the stories in the group	- The first viewing does not include analysis. - This is a viewing only to celebrate our achievement. - Reflections on seeing your own film.

Session	Purpose	Activities
Session 7: Inter-site viewing and power analysis	Reflect on each other's stories and identify factors which enable or block people's possibilities of acting as a citizen Identify common and divergent factors between stories within and between sites.	- Stories translated and subtitled - Warm up activity to get people thinking about sources of power (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002); elicit possible sources of power, what power looks like, if we have it, or others, why etc. agree on symbols - View stories 1 by 1, give a few minutes after each story for people to think, and write down their thoughts/symbols on power in this story. - After all stories are shown, feedback randomly, facilitators write up into a matrix. - Show the other site's stories 1 by 1, give a few minutes after each story for people to reflect and write down their thoughts on power in this story. - Feedback on similarities, differences - Award of certificates, vouchers, USB sticks and lunch

Step 1: The Gathering

The first step is 'the gathering', which covers a lot of ground, and took up one whole session in each site. In this session, I explained the process of DST, and we discussed the product, confidentiality and copyright issues. We watched some examples of digital stories, to help participants think about the kind of story they might like to tell. I gave some background to digital storytelling, explained each step of the process necessary to complete the story, and gave a small briefing on editorial and copyright issues. I showed a range of stories; some in English from the BBC's Capture Wales, and some from digital storytelling processes conducted in Spanish from Latin America (https://gojoven.org/espanol/media/historias-digitales/). Like Lewin (2011), I was apprehensive about showing the stories for fear of influencing participants' own stories or putting them off. In retrospect, I agree with Lewin that showing finished stories can prompt useful discussions and proved 'inspiring rather than prescriptive' (*ibid)*. This meeting was important to clarify expectations and the time commitment involved. All those who came, signed up for the whole process.

Step 2: Story circles and peer feedback

This step of writing the stories involved several cycles of individual and group sessions. Because of the previous activities (River of Life, in-depth interviews), participants already had a good idea of the story they wanted to tell. We began with an individual writing exercise, which was a response to the prompt: 'tell us about a time when you felt like/didn't feel like a citizen'. They were asked to craft a first draft of their story in three phases – beginning, middle and end. After 20 minutes, we came back to the circle. Those who wished to share, read out their stories and

were given feedback by their peers. I encouraged feedback to come from peers rather than from me as much as possible, but gave some stylistic guidance, for example ensuring that the story is told in the first person.

The co-researchers took their scripts home and worked on them individually to develop a full draft of around 1 page (100-200 words). They brought this draft to the next group session, where the stories were shared again. The group were asked to listen and give feedback on: what they heard, the key moment in the story, anything they didn't understand, what they most liked, if the story had a shape, colour and feeling. A few participants struggled with some aspects of the process. One found it impossible to be brief and wrote 5-6 pages. Another was not able to write her story, and so was supported by my co-facilitator who wrote down her story for her, as she talked. A third was reluctant to talk in the first person and adopted a journalistic style. I hesitated to ask him to rewrite as I could see his frustration, but I felt that reflexivity is central to the digital story, and it wouldn't work with such a tone. He agreed to rewrite and was happy with the result, although he continued to struggle to be reflective. I needed to build a lot of flexibility into the process in both sites, to allow sessions to run longer if needed, and I met with participants for one-to-one support sessions to craft and edit their stories, as required.

Step 3: Storyboard

The next step was to identify images to set alongside the story. I used simple, fun games to help people to start thinking visually – to think about images in relation to their ideas. In Matagalpa we used a version of lotto called 'La Chalupa', and in Bristol we played picture lotto. Storyboarding is the process of matching images to each part of a narrative. I gave them a storyboarding matrix (Appendix A11), which helped them to organise their stories into short sentences and select an image to accompany each sentence. In one column, participants wrote each sentence of their narrative. In the second column, they drew or described the image/photo they would use to accompany the narrative.

Figure 4: *Colin's storyboard in progress*

I lent a digital camera to those who needed one, to photograph images. Some images needed more creative thinking, and the participants began to work together to think up solutions. For example, Colin talks about racial equality in his story, and the group came up with the idea of using a photograph of their hands together in a circle, to represent this concept. Peer feedback also influenced editing decisions, as participants reconsidered whether

an image fitted their idea, or was too personal to use. This peer support and encouragement was hugely important.

Figure 5: Image representing equality, Colin's story, Bristol

Step 4: Recording the voice over

Once the stories were completed, each co-researcher needed to record themselves telling this story, which would become the voiceover to the digital story, giving the story its performativity (Ochs and Capps, 1996; Hull and Katz, 2006). I had borrowed three iPads so that the digital stories could be composed in iMovie. It proved simplest to record the voiceovers directly onto the iPads. It was a challenge to find a quiet corner to record, and it was a time-consuming process of recording and re-recording. One participant could not stick to his script when he recorded, and after several attempts I went along with it, as this was how he felt able to tell his story. In Bristol, much of the recording took place in one-to-one sessions. In Matagalpa, one of the participants had experience of radio, and was able to advise and support during the recording session. One Nicaraguan participant who had particularly taken to the method, added in music as well as the voiceover.

Step 5: Finalising the digital story

The participants had taken cameras home to take photos for their storyboards, and many also looked through existing photos. Some were creative, and though about how to communicate critical moments through images (see especially Samira, Colin, Alfie and Bartolo's stories); or through striking a particular pose (see especially Emilia and Maria's stories). The most technically challenging step for me, was assembling the photos, images and voice on the iPads. New to this technology, I had underestimated how tricky it would be to move visual data between devices. None of my participants owned laptops, only one participant in Bristol owned an iPad, and most photos were taken on phones or on the digital cameras that I provided. The most significant challenge was moving photos from mobile phones onto the iPad, which I had not predicted as I had expected everyone to use digital cameras from which I could easily upload. Once the photos and voiceover were on the iPad, I sat with each participant to support them to edit the order of the photos and the flow of the story. Some

participants were quick to learn the functioning of iMovie and were able to work independently, while others needed help, especially with the fine tuning of the phrasing of the narrative and accompanying images. It was therefore more time-consuming that anticipated.

Step 6: Viewing the digital stories

We held a first group viewing immediately after finalising the digital stories. This was deliberately kept as celebratory rather than analytical. It was important to recognise and appreciate the achievements before moving into analysis. Participants were really pleased with their achievement, and very appreciative of each other's stories and effort in the process. We did not work on sense-making from the stories at this meeting. Step 7 involves the analysis of the stories, which is discussed in the next section.

Phase 4: Collective analysis of the digital stories

Participants in each site came together a few months after the end of the story-telling process, to view the stories again in a facilitated space of dialogue and critical reflection (Ledwith and Springett, 2010).

Step 7: Power analysis and Inter-site viewing

This collective critical reflection was facilitated through a power analysis workshop, in which participants viewed again their own stories, and the stories from the other site. In these discussions and analysis of the stories, the co-researchers were involved in generating *and* analysing the research data, and identifying what felt most important to them. In this way, the process of abstraction from the stories, the finding of meaning and the extrapolation of meaning across stories within and between sites, became a collective process, which minimised the risk of my misinterpretation. In these workshops, the co-researchers were 'sense-making', generating analytical categories to identify meaning in their own and each other's stories. The analytical approach is explained in 3.5 below.

I introduced Miller & Veneklasen's (2002) power framework, after we had brainstormed 'power' as a concept, and I had elicited their ideas about different expressions of power. Step 6 had focused on first-person account, which were viewed but not analysed. This workshop enabled an abstraction from the first to the second person, by viewing and analysing the stories of others within the group. We also moved from second to third person research in viewing and analysing the stories of the *other* group. We had come back to the stories after a break of some months, which was helpful for participants to view and critically reflect on their own and each other's stories.

Analysis and collective critical reflection in this project demanded paying attention to what is said, and what is not said (e.g. the gaps in Colin's story), and to the relationship between the individual and the

context. This was facilitated through the power analysis which stimulates critical thinking - 'when we start to think critically, we question everyday life, and we expose the contradictions we live by' (Ledwith and Springett 2010, p220; see for example Bartolo's reflection on Ximena's story, section 5.3.1). The co-researchers responded to the audio-visual dimensions of the stories, which powerfully communicated emotion and often pain (Gregorio and Merolli, 2016). In both settings, they identified the lack of 'power within' and misuse of 'power over' as forms of structural power in their lives. They responded to each other's stories with compassion and solidarity, and demonstrated a critical consciousness in identifying expressions of power, and the turning points which foster agency ('power within' and 'power to'; see Chapter Six, sections 6.2.3 and 6.3, for full discussion).

Images and quotations from the digital stories are embedded in the thesis, and the transcripts are available in Appendix 14. The stories themselves are rich sources of relevant data, but it is also the process of creating and discussing these stories that makes the method relevant and productive for researching experiences of citizenship. As the next section (3.5) explains, the data analysis strategy was iterative, moving between the data produced by the co-researchers and the conceptual framework and research questions, to produce *a priori* and emergent thematic nodes. However, it is my own framework and questions that structure how the analysed data is presented and discussed in Chapters 4-6 of this thesis. This approach creates a tension with the PAR approach which aspires to give priority to co-researchers' own voices and analysis. In order to retain their direct voices and evidence their knowledge production in this thesis, I have inserted boxes in Chapters 5 and 6, with unedited and uncommented transcription of dialogue from the workshop discussions that took place during the creation, viewing and analysis of the digital stories.

3.5 Further data analysis

At the end of the fieldwork period, all the empirical data was gathered and analysed. Audio recordings of interviews and workshops, as well as field notes, were transcribed, coded and analysed. I also had visual materials from the workshops (rivers of life, flipcharts from brainstorming sessions, as well as the digital stories). All this material was collected or linked into N Vivo, which is a suitable programme for managing and analysing multi-media qualitative data.

3.5.1 Transcription

The transcripts were given coded titles and stored in N Vivo, linked to transcripts of my field notes (Appendix A12). I paid for transcription of the Nicaraguan interviews, for speed and accuracy of the

transcriptions. The transcriber was required to sign a confidentiality form (Appendix A5). The co-researchers were allocated pseudonyms, and I transcribed their story narratives and stored the text in N Vivo. Contact details and consent forms were stored separately on a password protected computer, and hard copies of data – including parts of the questionnaires, interview notes and printed transcripts – were kept securely. No contact details or material with identifiers were stored in any mobile memory device such as a USB stick.

All data collected in Nicaragua were in Spanish. These data were stored and analysed in Spanish, in N Vivo. I translated the digital story narratives in order to subtitle them for the inter-site viewings. All other data was analysed in the original language. Since I had developed all the fieldwork materials including interview guides and workshop plans in English and Spanish, I was able to move comfortably between the two languages.

3.5.2 Coding and thematic analysis

Qualitative data analysis frequently involves the identification of key themes and emerging concepts or categories (Bryman, 2012; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This research has involved identifying preliminary general themes from a review of the literature, to which further categories and sub-themes were added as the research unfolded (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The process of developing and refining the analytical framework has been iterative, and reflects the learning produced through the research process, as well as the guidance of my supervisors who encouraged rigour in clarifying a framework of aims, objectives, variables and indicators before fieldwork began, and which I revised as the participatory research process unfolded. The research group itself was involved in the analysis, identifying emerging themes and making meaning about their experiences.

Their categories were integrated into the coding framework, and additional themes emerged during the coding. This empirical data analysis was complemented by the interpretative analysis of policies (Yanow, 2007) and policy literature, to strengthen my understanding of the discourses and spaces of citizenship in each country context, and how policymakers construct meaning through policy discourses. The coding framework in N Vivo therefore includes a combination of pre-established and emergent nodes (see Table 6). The initial nodes related to key concepts in the literature, and additional nodes were added as themes emerged during the fieldwork process. Emerging themes became new analytical nodes in N Vivo, sitting alongside the pre-established nodes.

N Vivo enables a source (phrase, document, case) to be coded to multiple themes ('nodes'). The coded text is copied to the node, so that it is possible to read all the material coded to a node together, and to click back through to the original document. Overall, the themes/'nodes' generated were the same for the material from each site, although the distribution across the nodes was different. This

highlighted contextual differences: for example in governance systems (see 4.3.1 'governance dynamics' and 4.3.2 'governance spaces of citizen participation'), and government welfare provision (see 4.2.2 'social rights and welfare discourses'); and perception differences, for example of corruption and patronage in Matagalpa (see 5.1.2 'experiences of social rights', and 5.2.1 'formal spaces and informal dynamics'). Some sub-nodes were specific to each site. For instance, violence emerged as a significant theme in the Matagalpa setting (see 5.2.2 'citizenship and the informal space of community', and 5.3.1 'citizenship as subjectivities') but not in Bristol; whereas the integration of ethnic minorities was significant only in Bristol (see 6.3.1 'awareness of injustice'). Nuances within pre-established nodes emerged which were assigned as sub-nodes: work as a strong source of identity in Bristol (see 5.1.2); isolation as a characteristic of (not) belonging in Bristol (see 5.2.2); autonomy as a valued aspect of citizenship in Matagalpa (see 6.3.3 'from critique to acts of citizenship'); whereas powerlessness was expressed as a lived experience of citizenship in both settings (see 5.2.1 and 5.3.1).

Table 6: Analytical nodes

Research question	Node	Sub-node	A priori/ emergent
1	Governmentality	Discourses	A priori
2		Spaces	A priori
1	Formal processes of citizenship formation	Rights	A priori
		state-citizen relationship	A priori
		boundaries and levels	Emergent
1, 6	Neoliberalism	Neoliberalism	A priori
		Inequality	Emergent
		post neoliberalism or alternatives to NL	A priori
3, 6	Experience of state power	corruption, patronage	Emergent
		Abuse of power	Emergent
		hidden power	Emergent
2, 3, 6, 7	Experience of citizen power	Empowerment	A priori
		Powerlessness	Emergent
		Violence	Emergent
		positive, power within	A priori
		power with	A priori
		resistance	A priori
1, 3, 7, 8	Ideas of citizenship	Values	A priori
		place-based	A priori
		Tensions	Emergent
		participation	A priori
		education & knowledge	Emergent
		accountability	Emergent
4, 5, 8	Identity and belonging	Spatial	A priori
		Intersectional identities (gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, ability)	Emergent
		Community	A priori

Research question	Node	Sub-node	A priori/ emergent
		Isolation	Emergent
		Family	Emergent
		Work	Emergent
4, 5, 8	Recognition	Respect	Emergent
		Non-citizenship, exclusion	Emergent
8	Citizenship practices	Agency	A priori
		Autonomy	Emergent
		Relational	Emergent

The process of thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning, is cyclical (Braun and Clarke, 2006), as themes emerge at different stages: through the literature review, during workshop discussions, through transcribing and thinking about the workshop recordings, and then explicitly during the coding. After coding, the multiple themes and codes had to be reviewed to sharpen the focus and to assess the extent to which they were answering the research questions (*ibid*). I returned to the theoretical framework which I refined and the emphasis on governmentality and agency became stronger, in the light of my reflections on the findings.

The biggest challenge was to arrive at an analysis that is clear, meaningful and illuminating (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), while at the same time doing justice to the complexity of the research and the commitment of the participants. In doing this, I have had to weave a path between participatory analysis and qualitative desk-based analysis. In the final stage of the analysis, I revisited the literature review and revised the conceptual framework (Chapter Two), as well as re-reading transcripts and text coded under key nodes, in order to refine the analysis of the research findings with relation to this framework.

3.6 Quality, validity and ethics of the research

3.6.1 Quality and validity

Quality in qualitative and participatory inquiries demand different criteria from those used to evaluate quantitative research. It is argued that 'applying traditional criteria like generalizability, objectivity, and reliability to qualitative research is illegitimate' (Tracy, 2010, p.838), and that quality criteria need to relate to the paradigm that the researcher has adopted (Cresswell and Miller, 2000). Given that this inquiry combines a constructivist paradigm with a critical and reflexive paradigm, and emphasises a participatory research approach, these criteria need to be reassessed. First, this research focuses on

the *particular* over the generalizable. Personal accounts 'resonate and provide readers a potentially deeper and more valuable understanding' of an issue (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007, p.21). Second, it values subjectivity, reflexivity and collaboration between researcher and participants (Kelly, 2010; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007).

Further, theorists of quality in participatory research argue that it should be assessed on the basis of its *validity* (more than 'reliability'). This requires 'broadening the bandwidth' of research validity to encompass ethics, thereby 'shifting the dialogue about validity from a concern with idealist questions in search of 'Truth' to concern for engagement, dialogue, pragmatic outcomes and an emergent, reflexive sense of what is important' (Bradbury and Reason, 2006, p.343). Cresswell and Miller (2000, p.128) claim that 'credible' data is produced through close collaboration with participants, and that involving them in the study as co-researchers provides the 'validity lens' of building their views into the study. Following these perspectives and Tracy's (2010) 'big tent criteria', I argue that my findings are valid, not because they are generalizable, but because the topic is deemed 'worthy' according to both participants and relevant academic literature; the methods have been selected for 'rich rigor'; and the analysis and findings are coherent, credible, sincere, resonant and significant in accordance with the critical paradigm and participatory action research approach that underpin this research (Tracy 2010).

At the same time, the participatory co-inquiry was embedded in a broader research design which included semi-structured interviews and document review. This design also validates the research findings, since the data and analysis of the co-researchers is triangulated with the views of local and national informants and secondary data. Further, the data produced by the groups were collectively analysed, which validates and strengthens the research findings instead of the more limited 'respondent validation' in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012).

3.6.2 Ethics

Bradbury and Reason's (2006, p.344) validity criteria suggest what they call 'choice points', which can inform a process-oriented ethical framework. Complementing and extending the ethical review required at the start of the research, these criteria relate to process and outcomes. They are: the quality of the researcher's relationship with the group; the usefulness of the research process and outcomes to the co-researchers; how different ways of knowing are influencing the research; the significance of the work; and its enduring consequence. These criteria are useful to evaluate the quality, validity and ethics of my study and I will now speak briefly to each.

Since I had chosen to work with people living in marginalised neighbourhoods, I had to reflect on my own positionality and how to navigate my **relationship with the group** in a situation of economic

inequality, potentially increased by perceptions of academic knowledge as superior to lived experience. Speedy (2008) argues that inequalities must be recognised in order to develop trustworthiness between people (see also Bond, 2004). We talked openly about the research and its purpose; that I needed data for my PhD but that in the process they would produce their own digital stories.

However, carrying out research with people in poverty brings dilemmas. In Matagalpa, a co-researcher took me aside after one workshop and asked for some money to pay her university fees; another was very upset because her brother had gone missing while working in Costa Rica, and she wanted to go there to follow up with the police but lacked resources to get there. In Bristol, one of the co-researchers had her benefits suspended and was struggling to manage and to feed her baby son. The process of digital story-telling had brought us all close together, and it was difficult to navigate how to respond. In both instances, I discussed the situation with my co-facilitator and we worked out together what would be an appropriate response. In these moments, I experienced the tension between my accountability as a researcher, my personal desire to respond to someone's need, and the difficulty of drawing an ethical line in the sand.

Engaging in participatory research means working with anthropological methods as well as sociological, but as an engaged researcher who is trying to research 'with', not as an observer. This means trying to occupy the 'liminal' space of insider/outsider, building a relationship of mutual trust and respect, but still with the distance of facilitator/researcher (Eyben, 2009). As Speedy (2008, p.51) observes, 'one of the almost universal omissions in the traditional literatures and guidelines for human science research (including within counselling and psychotherapy) is that of the reciprocity of power relations between researchers and researched', especially when working with people considered to be 'vulnerable'. On reflection, I was able to navigate these power relations and this liminal position reasonably well thanks to having previous experience of working in both settings, and a trusted co-facilitator with deep knowledge of the setting with whom I could discuss my dilemmas.

The research process and outputs were evaluated as beneficial by the co-researchers, who described the experience as '*an opportunity to think about myself as a citizen'*; *'it raised my awareness about how my citizenship is part of my self-esteem*'; '*it was fantastic … it was like talking to myself in the mirror'*; '*I'll watch it again in the future*'; '*it's about different ideas of what it is to be "Nica"*'; '*I unburdened myself*'; '*it reassured me'* (quotes all taken from 'viewing the digital stories' workshops in both countries). They viewed their stories with a sense of pride and ownership. The product is tangible proof of their mastery of a digital technology, and their ability to produce a cultural product that can be shared. Sharing their stories within the group was also important, as they had to reflect on the

narrative they were using to talk about themselves, and to give and receive support and feedback from the group. The co-researchers were in charge of their own editing processes and chose what to include, what to leave out and how to represent themselves which, as Rahim (2012, p.99) observes, gives them a control over their own story, making it 'unique and compelling both to the individual who has made the story and to the viewer who generally does not get to experience such personal productions'.

The in-depth interviews enabled further opening up, which contributed to the richness of the stories and extended the data available for this thesis. It also created a more intimate space which was important for some (not all) of the participants to 'unburden' themselves. This was the case with Rosa, who shared in her interview:

> '*I looked after two of my siblings, and I had to do everything at home as if I was the mum, but I was only seven, I didn't go to school, some weeks yes other weeks no, and we were often hungry. I think I wanted to come to the interview today because I felt the need to unburden myself, I've hardly every spoken about what happened in my childhood to anyone, I haven't even told everything about what happened to me as a child to the psychologist'.*

Bartolo, on viewing the digital stories, reflected on how the final version of his story was 'softer' than the first version:

> '*It turned out a bit softer, possibly through editing it several times, which helped me to channel my emotions. I think I felt the need for a bit of catharsis, and I felt really released. When we began the process, I shared with you all how those memories were coming back to me in a painful way, and each of those memories felt very strong'.*

This demonstrates the importance of creating safe spaces for this unburdening and processing to take place as part of the research process.

The research was designed to draw on an **extended epistemology** through the deliberate use of the different media of text, audio and visual. These methods used in a facilitated process enabled participants to access memories, emotions and experiences, which powerfully informed their digital stories, and generated the knowledge that is discussed in this thesis. This suggests that the methods used were appropriate to the task, adaptable and accessible in both settings. Moreover, the use of text, audio and visual provided different ways of communicating as well as generating knowledge, which can contribute to greater cognitive justice.

These methods strengthened the **significance of the work** for those who were sharing their 'unheard-of stories' (Speedy, 2008). It is significant for people to tell their stories, in their own words, and using

their own voices and images rather than have their lives told through the discourse and images of mainstream media. The digital story becomes a tangible medium for agency. The stories also have **enduring consequence**: the co-researchers took their stories home on USB sticks, to share with their families and friends or continue to work on them. Some also decided to share them with others who might find them useful: one Bristolian and one Matagalpino participant planned to use their story as a way of helping others, either as a way of communicating a message (e.g. to other young mothers who are experiencing depression), or as a way of demonstrating a method for reflection and network building (e.g. with LGBT activists). This supports Hull and Katz's (2006) argument that DST processes can do more than identify spaces of possibility; they can provide the space for people to craft their agentive selves, to rewrite themselves as protagonists in their stories, and to critique stories in which their cultural setting had cast them as objects or as victims.

As Bradbury and Reason (2006) observe, in a pluralist community of inquiry, there will be a range of different degrees of interest to each of these questions: some co-researchers were more concerned with the relationships we were building, others with understanding the topic itself, others with taking action. This extended process is useful because it enables dialogue between these different perspectives, which increases the quality of the inquiry (*ibid*., p.346).

3.6.3 Positionality

I chose to work with groups in marginalised neighbourhoods, one in my home city, and another in a city in Nicaragua. The critical and participatory paradigm of this study required me to make efforts to minimise my researcher bias, by being aware of how I was likely to filter what I was observing through my own multi-subjective positionality. I tried to be aware of 'how [my] own lived experiences shape and filter what [I] attend to in a research project' (Yanow, 2007, p.114). I became conscious of how my positionality in each setting created discomfort for me in different ways. In Nicaragua, I was '*la Chela'*, the white European woman, with economic and social possibilities and freedoms. My fluency in Spanish was very helpful, as it enabled me to build up a rapport with my research participants, but I needed to be very mindful of the *kind* of language used in the research process in both settings, my own language preferences, and how language can reinforce injustice by silencing dissent or preventing the articulation of alternatives (Potvin and McQueen, 2008, in Ledwith and Springett, 2010, p.170). I tried to be alert to how I was phrasing instructions, allowing silences, and offering a range of activities that enabled people to articulate their ideas individually, in pairs or small groups, and through a range of media (drawing, writing, photography as well as speech).

In carrying out this study in England and a 'developing' country, I reflected a good deal on the challenges of decolonising research. A first step is to become more aware of the unequal power

relations in which I am embedded and which afford me privileges in these different settings. In Bristol, I was a middle-class white woman in a culturally diverse working-class neighbourhood, studying for a PhD at the elite University of Bristol. This was troubling for me as I felt that my positionality set me apart from the participants. In my own city, I was acutely aware of the cultural indicators of social class in a way that I was less tuned into – and less inhibited by – in Nicaragua. On reflection, over time we built trust and mutual commitment that enabled these differences to be navigated. As the co-researchers gained confidence with me and with others in the group, they expressed themselves more freely, challenged each other and me, and increasingly initiated or led discussions themselves.

In Matagalpa, I had to navigate my position as foreigner, a visitor without a stake in the locality. I built connections through spending more time in the neighbourhood on successive visits. On my first visit I stayed in the house of a friend of my co-facilitator. She was interested in the research and asked to join the group. On the second visit, my family accompanied me, and we all stayed with Lola and experienced life in a Matagalpino low-income neighbourhood. The children came to one of the DST workshops and helped upload photos, which was both a useful technical support and a way to connect more personally with the research participants, as they could relate to me as a parent as well as a researcher. Several of the participants involved their own children in helping them to find or to take photos for their stories.

This chapter has described the methodological approach and selected research methods used in this study, how the research process unfolded in each context; how the data was collected and analysed, and the ethical and practical considerations relating to the research methods and process. It makes a case for using this approach and these methods, in order to understand how citizens living in marginalised settings experience their citizenship. The next chapter presents the findings relating to how the state constructs citizenship in the contexts of Nicaragua and England.

Chapter Four How the state constructs citizenship: discourses and spaces

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Two discussed how citizenship is constructed by the state through rights frameworks, laws and policies. It was argued that universal rights frameworks (Rawls, 1971; Marshall, 1950; Habermas, 1998) are impacted on by conditionalities (Dwyer and Wright, 2014) which are a feature of neoliberal policies of austerity, or structural adjustment. Chapter Two also established that citizenship is shaped not only through legislation, but also through mechanisms which establish its legitimacy and acceptance. At the heart of these technologies is the power of government discourse, the narrative through which the state constructs 'subjects' or 'publics' or 'summons active citizens' (Newman and Clarke, 2009; Newman, 2010, 2011). It was argued that neoliberal governmentality theory is an appropriate analytical tool for studying the ways in which governments produce governable citizens, and that the technologies particularly relevant to this research are *discourse and space*. This chapter will address how citizenship rights are framed in the policy discourses and spaces of England and Nicaragua, and the implications for how citizen agency is understood and enabled in these settings. It addresses the following research questions:

How is citizenship constructed by the state, and how is it operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua?

- How do policies frame citizenship rights and practices? Do policy discourses construct citizens in terms of rights? What kind of citizenship is constructed?
- What are the institutional spaces for citizen participation? What kind of citizen agency is enabled?

The neoliberal governmentality and agency approach is used to explore how the state shapes citizenship through policy discourses and spaces, and the kind of citizenship that is constructed. Each section builds on parts of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Section 4.2 considers how citizenship is constructed in terms of rights in each context, and how political and social rights are contextually determined and interpreted through policy frameworks and discourses. It analyses citizenship in relation to rights, with reference to the literature reviewed in section 2.2. Section 4.3 of this chapter

focuses on governance policies, discourses and spaces, and how these shape rights and practices of citizenship. It relates these to the literature discussed in sections 2.3-2.5. Finally, Section 4.4 foregrounds agency, as argued in 2.6 of the literature review, to draw out some implications for citizen agency as constructed by governmental discourses and spaces, in each context.

This chapter takes a macro-level approach, to consider the construction of citizenship from a state perspective. Chapters Five and Six take a citizen, or micro-level perspective, and explore how citizenship relates to subjectivities (see 2.4), and how citizen agency is expressed, as acts of citizenship and resistance, as discussed in section 2.6 of the literature review. This chapter draws on my analysis of government documents in Nicaragua and England, and some grey literature relating to the policy environment in both countries. This data is supplemented where there are gaps (particularly in the Nicaraguan context), with 19 semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants in local and national government and civil society (see Chapter Three, section 3.3 and Table 3). The data which informs this chapter is a combination of these sources. The timeframe for data collection in this PhD research is 2013-2016, however the political cycles in each site have informed the policy documents that I refer to in this chapter. In Nicaragua, the political party currently in government (the Sandinista Front) took power in January 2007, which marked a decisive policy shift away from the previous regime. In the UK, the Coalition Government was formed in July 2010, which also marked a major shift in policy after a prolonged period of Labour government.

4.2 Rights discourses and the construction of citizenship

Chapter Two highlighted how abstract ideas of rights underpin citizenship in important ways, but that these relate to political and philosophical traditions which are differently adopted and interpreted in context (Rawls, 1971; Habermas, 1994; Fraser and Gordon, 1994). Rights interpreted as individual freedoms can be in tension with rights understood as social and collective (Marshall, 1950; Lister, 1997; Hirsto *et al*., 2014). Where rights are not equally accessed by all, some groups within society experience 'fragmented' or 'differentiated' citizenship (Engel 2016; Samov & Yishai 2018). This section will consider how rights framings and discourses shape citizenship in each context. Implications for citizen agency are also discussed.

4.2.1 Framing citizenship rights: freedoms vs participation

In England, citizens' rights are not guaranteed through a constitution, but through a range of domestic laws and ratified international covenants (e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

The discourse of rights enters the Coalition Government's vocabulary expressed as freedoms: 'The Government believes that the British state has become too authoritarian, and that over the past decade it has abused and eroded fundamental human *freedoms* and historic civil *liberties*. We need to restore the rights of individuals in the face of encroaching state power, in keeping with Britain's tradition of *freedom* and fairness' (Cabinet Office, 2010, p.11, my emphasis). This framing relates rights to citizenship in terms of freedoms, which is a libertarian interpretation that is linked to the logic of the (neoliberal) small state versus the large 'encroaching' state. Rights in this document are equated with individual 'freedoms', British 'liberties' and the value-based notion of government 'fairness' (*ibid.*) Formal political citizenship rights are established as entitlements which may be secured if certain criteria are fulfilled and, if applying for citizenship in the UK, on passing a test on knowledge of 'British traditions and customs' (UK Government, 2014).

In Nicaragua, political citizenship rights are established in the constitution, which was reformed by the Sandinista Front in 2007. It articulates a strong rights framing, and establishes chapter by chapter, the individual, political, social, labour, family and communal rights of Nicaraguan citizens, and states that it is 'an obligation of the State to eliminate any obstacle that impedes equality between Nicaraguans, and their effective participation in the political, economic and social life of the country' (Article 48, Government of Nicaragua, 2007a, my translation). This communicates an idea of rights as guaranteeing equality (rather than 'freedom'), and that the government has the duty to guarantee these rights and equalities. These obligations are accompanied by the principle of citizen responsibility as well as rights in Decree No. 112-2007 (Government of Nicaragua, 2007a), which establishes the responsibility of citizens to work with the state to combat poverty and unemployment (see Box 1). The Decree refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the national constitution as a basis for the right of citizens to engage in participatory and representative forms of democracy, thus making an explicit link between 'the rights of the Nicaraguan people and the exercise of participatory democracy' (*ibid*).

The rights discourse in Nicaragua emphasises citizens' participatory rights and responsibilities, with the state as guarantor of equality and citizens as co-governing (see 4.3 below), while the rights discourse in England emphasises freedoms and fairness. The Nicaraguan discourse thus uses more collective and active terminology with relation to rights, whereas the English discourse focuses on individual freedoms. These broad framings of citizenship as individual freedoms or collective and participatory rights and responsibilities, discursively shape the kind of citizen that is encouraged. The next section considers these framings in terms of citizen agency.

Box 1: Decree creating the Citizen Power Councils and Cabinets

CREATION OF THE COUNCILS AND CABINETS OF CITIZEN POWER

DECREE No. 112-2007, passed on 29th November 2007

That this Fundamental Principle of Participatory and Representative Democracy has been developed through countless laws, decrees, rulings, agreements and resolutions at local, departmental, regional and national levels, **with the objective of promoting the citizen as an active and participatory subject in the public life of the nation.**

Combining the rights of the Nicaraguan people to free organization and the exercise of participatory democracy with the faculties of the President of the Republic as granted him by the Political Constitution to create commissions or councils which make effective the exercise of these rights of our people to organize, in support of the policies of the President of the Republic that **the people should be who govern effectively** and together combat the poverty and unemployment inherited from former administrations.

Source: Government of Nicaragua (2007a). My translation and emphasis.

Rights discourses and citizen agency

The English discourse makes explicit emphasis on the freedom of the individual (from the danger of the overbearing state), which identifies the English discourse as libertarian, and deliberately names and separates the individual citizen from the social as the object of policy. Alongside this individualising construct, there is a moralising discourse, which is identified in Chapter Two as a feature of neoliberal governmentality (Ferguson, 2010). For example, citizenship is constructed as a status available to those (individuals) who are '*willing* to contribute': 'The government is working to make Britain a fair, free and democratic society open *to those who are willing* to contribute to British life' (UK Government website Policy Area: Equality, rights and citizenship: my italics). This language suggests a moral judgement on those would be British citizens, based on a view of their attitude, rather than objective criteria. Citizen rights are here described with relation to 'fairness', a value which is much repeated in Coalition government discourse, but which remains vague and generally not connected to social policies which could operationalise this 'fairness', nor to the structural drivers of socio-economic inequalities (perhaps with the exception of the 'Fairness Premium' launched by the Deputy Prime Minister in 2010 to improve equality in education opportunities (UK Government, 2010a). The Coalition government's discourse around equality and citizenship tends to focus on minority identities (particularly LGBT and ethnic minorities) without mentioning other inequalities such as economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, spatial and knowledge-based (ISSC, IDS and UNESCO, 2016) as relevant to a 'fair' society (see e.g. Cabinet Office, 2010: 18).

Nicaraguan rights discourse on the other hand is explicitly inclusive, and highlights the government's duty to pursue equality for all. Furthermore, the discursive constructs of 'citizen power' and '*el pueblo presidente'* (presidency of the people), construct citizenship as a political endeavour focused on the collective, not the individual (as in the case of England). The Sandinista Front's rights discourse explicitly challenges neoliberal models of citizenship, and rejects the actors, processes and spaces of neoliberal governance that emerged between 1990-2006 (see 4.3). A social movement leader reflects on the past, and argues that while neoliberal policies were applied in Nicaragua during the 1990s, citizens learned to defend their rights, rather than to follow orders – but that these rights had been established by the revolution:

> *'we went from a social revolutionary status, in which you conscientiously followed orders and took up the historic project of the revolution, to a political process in which we learnt to exercise our citizens rights, human rights to defend the achievements of the revolution, as individuals and as a collective, from different sectors of society' (Ex-coordinator of social movement, NCS6).*

The government's discourse rejects the legacy of 'the neoliberal years' and instead promises to 'restore rights' to people – that is, they do not need to claim them because the state will guarantee them. This has implications for citizen agency, as another civil society respondent (director of a CSO in Matagalpa) observes:

> '*there's talk of rights and restitution of rights as if someone can give you rights, and restore them to you back to how you had them before, but their narrative is that the revolution gave you your rights, neoliberalism took them away from you, and they [the Sandinista Front government] are giving them back to you, that's how I understand their logic when they talk about restitution'* (Director, local civil society organisation, LCS3-M).

There are thus conflicting discourses in Nicaragua, between citizens as participatory actors called on in Decree 112-2007 (see Box 2, p.101) 'to participate in the integral development of the nation' *in a direct and active way*, and the passive citizen to whom government will restore rights. In England, there is a tension between the idea of the free, individual rights-bearing citizen, and the citizen as object of a moralising discourse. Despite their different emphases, both governments employ a vocabulary of rights, and use this discourse to distinguish their political projects with relation to those of previous governments. In particular, both use the discourse of 'restoration of rights', which further shapes how citizens are constructed in relation to the state and is the focus of the next section.

Discourses of 'restoring' rights

While both governments claim they are 'restoring rights' to citizens, the rights they are restoring are quite different. In England, the Coalition Government announced that '[w]e need to *restore the rights of individuals* in the face of encroaching state power, in keeping with Britain's tradition of freedom and fairness' (Cabinet Office, 2010: 11, my emphasis). This discourse strongly suggests that the outgoing government's policies towards citizens had infringed on their liberties and citizens' rights. The Coalition Government refers to New Labour policies as 'encroaching' on individual citizens' civil liberties, which this new government will restore. The Sandinista Front Government on the other hand, claims to restore rights which have been eroded by the series of governments between 1990 and 2007 which introduced neoliberal reforms.

This 'restoration of rights' discourse has been amplified and maintained in Nicaragua. A key Sandinista intellectual and activist close to government, Orlando Nuñez (2009, p.242), described the Sandinista Front Government's 2007 decree as 'the construction of citizens' power, as a means of restoring citizen rights … denied by previous governments' … which means the possibility of revolutionizing representative democracy, overcoming its limitations through direct democracy' (cited in Perla and Cruz-Feliciano, 2013, their translation). This discourse is widely communicated through legislation, but also through its various media outlets, in particular through the government's official website *La Voz del Sandinismo* (The voice of Sandinismo) and government-owned radio station *Radio La Primerísima.* Publicity and communications about government programmes make reference to human rights: for example, social housing is communicated as 'the government has *restored the citizen right* to dignified housing' (*La Voz del Sandinismo*, 2010). This discourse is also amplified through radio stations such as 'the New Radio Ya' which broadcast that 'the government has *restored the rights* of Nicaraguan women, in spite of the dramatic statistics on women's rights inherited from the neoliberal governments' which, according to the vice-president, have been rectified through 'open spaces in the political, social and labour spheres' (2015). *Radio La Primerísima* (2009) also reported 'the *restoration of the rights* of the people'.

In both settings, rights are invoked, with different emphases, but with similar objectives of persuading that the previous administration had denied rights, and that these rights are restored by the current government. This shapes citizenship rights not as actively defended by citizens, but as within the gift of government. The impact of discourse on citizen rights in England is to construct citizenship as a liberal, individual status which is in government's power to restore, but which requires the appropriate attitude to secure. This resonates with Ferguson's (2010) 'responsibilised' neoliberal citizen. In Nicaragua, the impact of discourse is to frame citizens' rights as collectively experienced, but provided

by government rather than claimed or won by citizens themselves. In both cases, despite the different ideological positions, both discourses link the idea and practice of citizenship to the government's project. How these discourses are shaping social citizenship, is considered in the next section.

4.2.2 Social rights and welfare discourses

How social policy discourses frame citizenship rights and practices, needs to be considered in the context of the commodification of social policy (Kennett & Dukelow, 2018); the global financial crisis of 2008, and government responses to this crisis. There has been a marked shift away from Marshall's argument that citizenship must recognise social and economic, as well as political rights, and that the state has responsibility to protect these rights and to guarantee the wellbeing of all its citizens. Yet as Donnelly (1998) argues, in the context of neoliberalism, the state's role in protecting those who are disadvantaged by domestic and global economic processes and crises becomes even more important. National policies and discourses relating to social security or welfare are considered in this section. Analysis of policy documents and key informant interviews show that the two governments have taken diverse approaches to 'austerity', with different implications for citizens' social rights.

Navigating austerity

Both the Sandinista Front and the Coalition Government arrived in government in the context of the global financial crisis, which they approached with strong ideological positions with relation to economy and society. The Coalition Government embraced a neoliberal approach to tackling the financial crisis widely described as 'austerity', which involved the introduction of fast and deep cuts to public spending, followed by a freeze on benefits and tax credits in 2015. This has impacted on citizens' economic and social rights. In contrast, when the Sandinista Front took power in 2007, Nicaragua had experienced sixteen years of structural adjustment and many were questioning the on-going neoliberal paradigm of harsh reductions in public spending on social programmes, and seeking an alternative. The aspirations of the new government spoke directly to these concerns, as voiced by Nuñez (2009: 242) 'The victory of the Sandinista Front means, in the first place, the containment of neoliberalism and the end of neoliberal measures'. The Nicaraguan anti-neoliberal discourse has been accompanied by significant investment in education (formal and informal), and in programmes to reach marginalised communities, funded through profits from importing oil from ALBA ally, Venezuela (see section 2.3.2).

In England, the Coalition Government chose not to use fiscal stimulus to mitigate the impact of the financial crisis, but to introduce fiscal austerity, which has been maintained and deepened under the Conservative Government (2015). This was in tune with the IMF, which switched to advocating fiscal austerity as the Eurozone crisis loomed (IMF, 2014). This approach meant that to reduce the

government budget deficit, the main mechanism would be to reduce government spending rather than to raise money through taxation. However, subsequent cuts in health and education budgets and social security benefits have had immediate and prolonged impacts on the poorest sectors of society (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016a). The Sandinista Front Government has similarly followed the doctrine of the international financial institutions which required maintaining low government expenditure, even while in its discourse, it rejects neoliberal 'structural adjustment' (the term used in the region to describe fiscal austerity during the 1990s and early 2000s). In fact, the Sandinista Front's financial management gained the approval of the IMF (Pinon *et al*., 2012) and the World Bank for its 'disciplined macroeconomic policies' (World Bank, 2018).

This can be explained because Nicaragua's economy is still reliant on loans from the international financial institutions, and must therefore meet the requirements of the IMF. However, joining ALBA gave the Sandinista Front access to an alternative source of financing, in particular through an arrangement with the Government of Venezuela to import oil. ALBA operates in Nicaragua through a private corporation called ALBA de Nicaragua S.A. (ALBANISA), which is co-owned by Petróleos de Venezuela and PETRONIC, its Nicaraguan counterpart. Nicaragua imports Venezuelan oil through PETRONIC, which pays ALBANISA. This money is split between Petróleos de Venezuela and ALBA's social fund and bank (Perla and Cruz-Feliciano, 2013), and annual income from this has ranged from around $300 million in 2010, reduced to $170 million in 2015 (Banco Central de Nicaragua, 2015). As a result, the government has been able to offset the impact of IMF austerity requirements by introducing new social welfare programmes funded with profits from this oil deal.

Alongside these policy decisions about financial strategies and social spending, government discourses are framing citizens' social and economic rights in both settings. In England, the Welfare Reform Act, with its language of penalties and conditionality, emphasises the responsibility of citizens to be in work and that failure is punishable. In Nicaragua, investment in social programmes has enabled some programmes to be extended to reach citizens in marginalised communities. However, the Nicaraguan discourse of welfare inclusion is also paternalist, and programmes are delivered through mechanisms that are engendering or further entrenching clientelism. The differentiated impacts of these discourses on social rights are discussed in the next section.

England: constructing social citizenship as conditional

Chapter Two (Section 2.2) noted Shutes and Taylor's (2014) view that austerity in Europe has transformed the organising principle of social citizenship from rights to conditionality. While Nicaragua has navigated austerity with the help of Venezuela and invested in social programmes, English austerity has pared down public services which, together with a freeze on benefits and public-

sector salaries, has resulted in an increase in in-work as well as out-of-work poverty, with greatest impact on single parents and BME families (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2017). A central policy that has impacted on social and economic rights is the Welfare Reform Act (2012), which introduced measures to reduce spending on welfare, including new penalties and exclusions for benefits claimants. This Act is criticised for pushing the poorest further into poverty, for example through a cap on benefits, and limiting benefits to families with more than two children (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016a, 2016b). During the period of this research, poverty in the UK has risen steadily, and child poverty is predicted to rise to 30% by 2021 (Brewer, Brown and Joyce, 2011; Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2017; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2017). According to Citizens Advice, the number of people advised on managing debt and access to benefits increased from 2.3 million in 2013/14 to 2.7 million in 2016/17 (Citizens Advice 2014, 2017).

The Coalition Government also introduced the controversial Universal Credit, which seeks to incentivise claimants to return to work. Universal Credit is conditional on fulfilling a 'Claimant Commitment' which requires demonstrating to a 'work coach' that, if able, the claimant is making all efforts to secure work:

> 'You will need to do everything you reasonably can to give yourself the best chance of finding work. Preparing for and getting a job must be your full-time focus. If you do not do this without a good reason, you will have a cut to your Universal Credit, known as a sanction' (UK Government, 2016b).

This is a discourse which emphasises work over rights, and establishes conditions based on both status and a judgement of attitude, in a similar vein to the political citizenship for those 'willing to contribute' discussed above. Increasingly, the receipt of benefits is conditional on progress towards work (including for those with disabilities or caring responsibilities), a 'work-focused interview' or work preparation, work search, work availability whereby for example:

> 'a "work preparation requirement" is a requirement that a claimant take a particular action specified by the Secretary of State for the purpose of making it more likely in the opinion of the Secretary of State that the claimant will obtain paid work (or more paid work or better-paid work)' (UK Government, 2012).

The British Social Attitudes Report (Phillips *et al*., 2018) identified a rise in public intolerance towards benefits claimants, with a significant increase in the percentage who thought that current benefit payments were 'too high'. The change in eligibility criteria and the requirement to show work-readiness, fuels and combines with increasing negative social attitudes towards welfare claimants,

portraying claimants as potential cheats or scroungers who need to be carefully supervised. As a result, the experience of citizens seeking or claiming benefits is likely to be a loss of self-respect and anxiety about sanctions. At the same time, fear of sanctions and poverty undermines people's sense that they have the right to dignified work, and to benefits. The director of an organisation working in a marginalised neighbourhood of Bristol, commented on the disempowering impact of these reforms:

> *'they're just so fearful about losing their jobs and the complications that causes, and then being sanctioned for things they don't understand, and having no money'* (Director, community-based organisation, LCS2B).

Nicaragua: constructing social citizenship as patronage

The centrepiece of the Sandinista Front Government's poverty reduction strategy is its Food Production Programme known as 'Zero Hunger'. Introduced in 2007, it aims to eradicate hunger, chronic malnutrition and extreme poverty, through three components: capitalisation through the issuing of a Food Production Bond; technical support and training; and organisation through local 'cells' and cooperatives (MEFCCA, 2019). It is funded from a range of sources, including the Treasury, international cooperation, and ALBA (Food and Nutrition Security Platform, 2019). ALBA funding is also used to top up public sector salaries and for *Plan Techo,* which provides zinc roofing panels to people in extreme poverty. The programmes make an important contribution to reducing income inequality and improving living standards: according to the 2014 Standard of Living Survey, between 2009 and 2014 general poverty in Nicaragua dropped from 42.5 percent to 29.6 percent (Instituto Nacional de Información sobre el Desarrollo, 2014) and extreme poverty fell from 14.6 to 8.3 percent.

It is important to observe the progress made in poverty reduction in this period, given the very limited progress in reducing poverty during the 1990s. The administration of Violeta Chamorro that replaced the Sandinista government after its defeat in 1989, adopted the macro-economic 'shock therapy' prescribed by the IFIs, which conditioned access to loans for highly-indebted nations (International Development Association & International Monetary Fund, 2000). Known as 'structural adjustment', these measures were rapidly introduced in order to stabilise the economy, but drastically reduced government capacity to spend on social programmes, and were met with mass strikes and mobilisations across the social sectors. Structural adjustment impacted negatively on social rights and also on how Nicaraguan citizens perceived their wellbeing. In the following decade, and partly in response, the IFIs shifted to 'poverty reduction strategy programmes', intended as an opportunity to adapt neoliberal macro-economics to national realities and enable civil society participation and 'local ownership' viewed by many as a form of 'inclusive' neoliberalism (Ruckert, 2007).

While the period since 2007 has seen reductions in poverty, investigative journalists have raised concerns about the lack of transparency around how ALBANISA funds are managed, and profits are distributed (Confidencial, 2011; Envío, 2013). There is also widespread concern about how the 'bonds' are distributed. According to the Instituto de Investigación Económica y Política (2011), the bonds (in the form of cattle, chickens, animal feed, zinc for roofing) are delivered in the form of handouts, and not transparently distributed. This view is supported by a study of the Zero Hunger Programme undertaken in the rural north of the country, which found that the programme had used 'party structures at municipal and community levels in the implementation of the programme, and particularly in the selection of beneficiaries' (Larracoechea Bohigas, 2014). While citizenship is constructed in terms of rights, the welfare programmes are implemented through patronage networks or as 'gifts' from the President and his wife, reinforcing citizens' role as dependent beneficiaries and requiring them to be grateful rather than empowered to exercise their citizen rights:

> *'It's a deeply regressive process they're inculcating us in, that someone is doing us a favour, that things come to us from heaven or even from 'parents', from a mum and a dad, because every day there's the mum on the radio at 11am saying "thanks to God that things are going nicely, let us praise God, and the government of Commander Ortega!"'* (Ex-coordinator of social movement, NCS6).

This clientelism is at odds with the discourse of 'citizen power' articulated in Decree 112. However, the rights discourse of this decree shifted when the legislation was revised to sit within the Family Code. At this point, the Citizen Power Committees became 'Cabinets of the Family, Community and Life' (Nicaraguan National Assembly, 2014). This signifies a shift in discourse from a rights-bearing participatory subject, to a construct which is rooted in family and community. This confusion of rights and mix of values is further muddled in Article 32 of the Family Code which says that the Cabinets are 'inspired by Christian values, socialist ideals and solidary practices'.

The FSLN's return to power was assisted by a pact with the Catholic Church, which may account for the current mix of anti-neoliberal, socialist and Christian discourse. There is an argument that the Family Cabinets as described in the Family Code are unconstitutional, since their religious basis contradicts the freedom of conscience, thought and religion that are protected under Article 29 of the Constitution (Carta Magna). For many Nicaraguans who are devout Christians and supporters of the Sandinista revolution, it is a powerful mix. This was illustrated to me in an interview with a member of a Municipal Family Cabinet (and Sandinista Front party member), who explained that '*improvements happen in our neighbourhoods because God has permitted it*' (Interview, April 2016).

A third element of the Sandinista Front Government's discourse is that it draws on the traditions of

indigenous cultures in Latin America, and the indigenous world view of '*sumak kawsay*' in Quechua, which translates into Spanish as '*buen vivir*' or living well, living a full life. To indigenous peoples of the region, it signifies a way of life that is good for the community and the natural resources on which the community depends, rather than the 'good life' of the individual. The concept has emerged from the traditional worldviews of Andean indigenous peoples and for development theorists, it reframes the way 'well-being' is conceived and, like 'Degrowth' in Europe and 'Ecological Swaraj' in India suggests a post-neoliberal and post-development model (Monni and Pallotino, 2015; Kothari *et al*., 2014). It has travelled across the region and has been translated into national policy discourses. It was adopted by the Sandinista Front Government, and reframed as '*vivir bien, vivir bonito*' (live well, live nicely).

This combination of socialist, rights and indigenous discourses, tailored to a typically informal Nicaraguan expression ('*vivir bonito*') is inspirational for those who identify with the language of revolutionary socialism, and at the same time tempers it and makes it more palatable to non-Sandinistas nationally, and to international donors. The incorporation of *buen vivir* suggests the government's commitment to listening to and working with heretofore marginalised indigenous knowledge, and to protecting and guaranteeing the natural environment (Acosta, 2013; Tortosa, 2011). The translation into *vivir bonito* makes the discourse more accessible and familiar, suggestive of a cosy and paternalist relationship between the government and its citizens.

Implications of social rights and welfare discourses for the construction of citizenship

To return to the question of how the state constructs citizenship in Nicaragua and England; this is partially explained by the rights discourses explored in 4.2.1, but also by the social policy discourses and their mode of implementation, which are shaping citizen rights in differentiated ways, and resulting in increasingly fragmented citizenship, as signalled by Samov and Yishai (2018) and Holston (2012) (see 2.2). In England, there is evidence that social rights are becoming conditional, as the state increasingly requires claimants to demonstrate they are trying to get work. In addition, these conditions for accessing social and economic rights are underpinned by moralising discourses: citizenship is for the 'willing', for those prepared to strive for market participation. Understood as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, this moralising discourse serves government by increasing public perception that benefits discourage people from working, and delegitimising welfare claimants, thus building support for further austerity measures.

Reforms to social policies in Nicaragua on the other hand, are extending access to social programmes to marginalised communities, suggesting a more universalist and inclusive approach to social citizenship. The Nicaraguan approach to social citizenship has a stronger commitment to social and economic rights, as it offsets fiscal austerity with both universal and targeted social welfare

programmes. It has only been able to do this due to profits from the resale of Venezuelan oil, but with a lack of transparency about how these profits are managed. In addition to this issue of accountability, the mode of service delivery is clientelist, with access linked to Party membership/patronage rather than based on citizen rights, despite the vocabulary of rights deployed in the constitution. This becomes a form of conditionality, whereby citizen rights and benefits can only be accessed by Party members. So, while conditionality in the literature appears as a feature of neoliberalised welfare states such as England and New Zealand (Edmiston and Humpage, 2018), this study finds that social policy discourses and dynamics also create conditional citizenship in the 'anti-neoliberal' setting of Nicaragua.

This conditionality has implications for accountability in both contexts. Much of the accountability literature argues that when citizens know and exercise their rights, they are in a position to mobilise, to contest any infringement of these rights, and demand accountability with respect to public services and goods (Fox, 2015; Fung and Wright, 2003). However, benefit claimants who are fearful of sanctions (England), or beneficiaries who are at risk of losing party patronage (Nicaragua), have much to lose if they raise their voices to demand citizen rights. For some, silence is not an option - a national civil society respondent in Nicaragua equated acquiescence with a loss of citizen rights:

> '*you can't give up your right to know what's in the Budget – I'm not going to give up, I'm going to look for the information, do the analysis, offer my recommendations – that's what I won't give up because if I do, then we're giving them a completely free rein'* (Director of national research institute, NCS2).

This organisation has now been closed down by government. When the space for civil society and citizen voice and participation is restricted, citizen agency is curtailed. Yet an important aspect of citizenship highlighted in the literature is the role that citizens play in strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of the state (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001; see Chapter 2.5.3). The next section will focus on the dynamics and spaces of citizen participation in governance, and their significance for citizenship.

4.3 Governance and spaces for citizen participation

This section considers the research sub-questions: What are the institutional spaces for citizen participation? What kind of citizenship is enabled? It analyses the governance policies that create spaces in which citizenship is practised, and the implications of these spaces and the discourses that

shape them, for citizen agency. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests that the implications of decentralisation for citizenship are to open spaces for democratic engagement and empowerment (Fung and Wright, 2003), and/or for the coproduction of public services (Brandsen and Honingh, 2016). Scholars have also indicated the risk of citizen co-option or control through these spaces (Taylor 2011; Carmel and Harlock, 2008). The late twentieth and early twenty-first century in both Nicaragua and England saw a 'governance turn' (see 2.3.1), with the flourishing of policies and programmes to decentralise government, strengthen civil society and bring citizens into governance processes as decision makers, service providers and as monitors of state spending. The following section explores how decentralisation in each setting has shaped how citizenship is understood and practised.

4.3.1 Governance dynamics: decentralisation

Decentralisation is a feature of governance models in both settings, albeit with a difference in emphasis on the respective roles of market, state and citizens**.** The Nicaraguan governance model in principle devolves power *to citizens* at the local level, with a discourse of participatory governance for local development: 'the people should be who govern effectively and together combat the poverty and unemployment inherited from former administrations' (see Box 1, p.83). According to a government respondent in Nicaragua, this concept of radical participatory governance rests on the idea of

> *'participation with complementarity in which everyone contributes – it's not just one way - people complement what the government proposes, people contribute, and other actors, that's the concept of complementarity … and shared responsibility'* (National government advisor, NGov2).

In England, the main policy for decentralisation has been the Localism Act (2011), which promised the devolution of powers *to the local authority,* together with increased citizens' rights to referendum and the option to directly elect the leader of the council (mayor). Through this legislation, Bristol held a referendum and elected its first directly-elected mayor in 2012 (Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012). Both models recognise a role for the private sector in local governance. The Nicaraguan decentralisation model prioritises citizen participation, but also makes space for *'strategic alliances with different actors - the local government and the private sector make alliances with the community to resolve the community's problems'* (national government advisor, NGov2), In the English model, authorities, communities and citizens need to operate like businesses in this new environment. As Minister Eric Pickles (2011, p.1) announced,

> ‘we want every community to be open for business and rewarded for economic growth, but at the moment there is no motivation for councils to support local firms or create new jobs. One of the best ways we can change that is to free councils from their enslavement to government grants and put them in control of their own destiny’.

In the English context, this merging of economic discourse with the language of empowerment and freedom carries with it a message that local development requires a market-oriented decentralised form of governance, independent of central government funding; a market reform approach to neoliberal governance, in Gaventa’s (2010) typology. This discourse prepared the way for these new devolved powers to be followed by massive reductions in funding from central government, requiring Bristol City Council to cut its spending by £92 million over five years (Rees, 2016), inevitably resulting in cuts to services that support citizens’ social and economic wellbeing, and decentralised spaces for democratic participation.

While both models explicitly acknowledge a role for the private sector in local governance, in England the government discourse of 2010 paved the way for austerity governance with a peripheral role for citizens, whereas the discourse in Nicaragua invited citizens into a co-governance model, with the private sector working in partnership with citizens and local governments. However, given the socialist discourse and anti-neoliberal stance, the Sandinista Front has established an unlikely alliance with the private sector, as described by Nicaraguan businessman Carlos Pellas as an ‘alliance entailing a unity of purpose’ between political and business interests (cited in Icaza, 2016). A civil society respondent suggested that this alliance has acceptance because ‘*the people have been sold the idea that this political-private alliance, private sector and government, will bring more jobs’* (ex-coordinator, social movement, NCS6). He went on to argue that this tolerance from the private sector towards the socialist government is likely to change, ‘*once the new elite emerges - the Sandinista elite - and starts to move ahead of the traditional business elite’ (ibid.).*

In Nicaragua, the discourse of decentralisation is accompanied by the *re*-centralisation of the direction and management of public services. Resources are centrally held and managed, and the expectation is that citizens will participate in monitoring these services locally, and *directly* inform the President. According to a senior government respondent:

> *‘There’s direct communication with the President of the Republic to inform him on any problems in schools. If parents experience a problem, they can write directly to the President. Often the County Delegates of the Ministry don’t solve problems, which is why parents write to the President directly. We send a report to the Presidency every day to inform on all issues and situations in the area of education’ (*Senior Politician, NGov3*).*

From this state perspective, citizens are practising direct and everyday democracy in monitoring local services and communicating upwards to the President. From another perspective, it is extraordinary to channel all citizens' concerns about services to the Presidency. This centralised control is manifested in the citizen participation system, discussed in 4.3.2 below. These tendencies are interpreted by others as promoting partisan citizenship and undermining the idea of decentralised co-governance, through

> *'a concept of citizenship that keeps the citizen subject of the state; I mean, the citizen acts, moves, participates in activities that are generated according to the state's interests, but I would say according to the Party's interests. I say this, because I know that in many cases municipal governments have laid aside their municipal development plans in favour of following the directives of the Party … what needs to be done or said is determined by what the Party wants to achieve, not what the citizen wants to achieve'* (director of national training organisation, NCS5).

In England, the governance logic is that the gap created through the withdrawal of state funding should be filled by the *social action of citizens*, with policies 'encouraging social action by making it easier for people to volunteer, to donate to charity and to help improve their local community' (Cabinet Office and Her Majesty's Treasury, 2013). For a local government respondent, this feels like top-down intervention that undermines decentralisation, by promising

> *'a litany of things that government is doing nationally to empower communities, and of course there are things like give them buildings, get them to bid for services, let them do spatial planning, all of which are very handy tools if that's where you're at in your community but they're not exclusively about active citizenry and they're actually a mechanism for national government to push local government to one side'* (Senior officer, local government, LGov1-B).

From a civil society perspective, this has translated into the co-option of community members into government volunteering schemes:

> '*I think it's the child of Big Society … And I also see that there's a competition for volunteers. The voluntary sector has relied on volunteers for service delivery, for its governance, and for campaigning, from the beginning of time, but now as the state reduces and the government's agenda is to engage more people in active citizenship and replace public sector workers with active citizens, then there's a tension'* (Director, civil society organisation, LCS1-B).

This section has explored how decentralisation policies are shaping the spaces and discourses of citizenship. In relation to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, decentralisation discourses shape ideas about citizenship because they promise greater powers to citizens. However, in both contexts this is accompanied by a more centralised control of citizen participation, with an invitation for active citizens to work alongside government according to programmes which are centrally, not locally defined. This resonates with Carmel and Harlock's (2008) argument that local governance spaces are a site of control, rather than Fung and Wright's (2003) vision of empowered citizens engaging in deliberative democracy (see 2.5.3). Another factor that emerges through this comparison, is that training and capacity-building for citizen participation previously supported through civil society organisations has seen a reduction in funding in both settings. The next section explores the changing role of civil society organisations in local governance in each context, and its implications for citizenship practices.

Civil society organisations in local governance

During the 1990s in both England and Nicaragua, CSOs played a significant role in local governance, as discussed in 2.3.2, with a seat at the table in Local Strategic Partnerships in England, and in Municipal Development Committees in Nicaragua, representing and advocating for the interests of a range of citizens. In England however, the role of CSOs has been shaped, or even neutralised, through their reshaping as service delivery agents, with increasing pressures to professionalise through the application of new public management tools, which are recognised as a technology of neoliberal governmentality in the literature (Ferguson, 2010; Hay, 2007). A CSO respondent described this tendency as:

> '*… neoliberal managerialism. It was the beginning of breaking up the welfare state, it was about getting places like us to deliver services. And it brought about a shift in people's perceptions of people who come and use services … all of a sudden we're the professionals who know things … it completely changed the dynamics around equality of those relationships*' (Director, civil society organisation, LCS2-B).

The implications for citizens of this shift into professionalised service delivery, is that it distances CSOs from the communities they serve and has also reduced their capacity to work as intermediaries and advocates. This has particular implications for marginalised groups and communities, who have previously relied on CSOs as a source of information, and also to amplify their voice and influence at higher levels of governance (Anheier, 2009).

There has been a backlash in both countries against the enlarged role for CSOs promoted by previous governments. In England, while the previous Labour administration had invested in the sector and

created space for them to play a role in governance as well as in service delivery (Kendall, 2004), the Coalition government did not encourage this role. It moved against civil society organisations perceived to be using government funding for advocacy and lobbying purposes:

> *'… the voluntary and community sector needed to have a voice; that was understood by the last Labour government, that the sector was there to influence policy decisions, and had a space at the table … it seems a long time ago now … and then this government introduced the anti-lobbying bill'* (Director of CSO, LCS1-B).

The Institute of Economic Affairs was commissioned by government to investigate CSOs suspected of state-funded political activism, which it described as 'sock puppets', suggesting duplicity and self-endorsement (Snowden, 2012). It was argued that such organisations divert 'taxpayers' money' to 'fund lobbying rather than the good causes or public services' (UK Government, 2016a). The result was a gagging clause that, according to a Baring Foundation study (Singleton *et al.*, 2015), compromised the independence of the sector and its freedom to criticise government and to channel citizens' views and participation into governance processes.

Similarly, in Nicaragua prior to 2007 there was a major role for CSOs in advocacy as well as service delivery. Civil society organisations were active in training and supporting processes for citizen participation and advocacy, in both local and national governance spaces. This changed when the Sandinista Front entered government, and formally questioned both international non-governmental (INGO) involvement and donor cooperation, particularly targeting projects run by local counterparts to promote democracy, citizen participation, governance, transparency and human rights, and accusing such projects of 'political interference' (Castan, 2011). Communicating through the official media source 'El 19 Digital', the First Lady Rosario Murillo described CSOs as 'Trojan horses of imperialism' which were trying to 'destabilise' the government of Daniel Ortega (El 19 Digital, 2008), a discourse that was revived after the recent anti-government protests (El 19 Digital, 2018). At the same time, local governance mechanisms were restructured into Citizen Power Committees (later restyled as Family Cabinets). These are discussed in more detail in the next section.

To sum up, governance dynamics in Nicaragua and England at the time of this research have undergone significant changes which impact on how citizenship and citizen participation is conceptualised and practised. England in particular has seen the reprioritisation of the private sector in local governance; in both settings, discourses of democratic decentralisation to empower the citizen are undermined, either by lack of funding (England) or by centralising tendencies (Nicaragua); and both countries have experienced a backlash against the enlarged role of CSOs in governance. In both settings there has been a resurgence of interest in 'active citizens', who are invited to participate in

their communities in social action. The local spaces for this citizen participation are discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Governance spaces: citizen participation

Despite their different political ideologies, governments in both Nicaragua and England have introduced new powers for citizens to participate in governance. In England, the Coalition Government promised to 'promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups' (Cabinet Office 2010, p.11). In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Front Government promised to enable 'the exercise of direct and participatory democracy of the different social sectors of the country' (see Box 1). In both cases, the discourse suggests a shifting of power to local government, and above all to citizens, constructing the citizen as an empowered actor. These discourses of citizenship interact with spatial dynamics in geographical spaces, where processes of citizenship inclusion or marginalisation are experienced (Harvey, 2005; Huxley, 2008). The following sections explore some specific local spaces of citizen participation in Bristol (England) and Matagalpa (Nicaragua), and consider the implications for citizens living in marginalised settings.

Bristol: Closing of democratic spaces, opening of spaces for 'social action'

The governance spaces for partnership working at the municipal level established under New Labour - 'Local Strategic Partnerships' – were created to enable the participation of citizens alongside government and business in local governance. These partnerships were supported to ensure citizen 'voice' and 'influence' in decision making at city-level. In Bristol, Neighbourhood Partnerships were also established at ward-level. These were designed to enable citizen engagement in decentralised decisions, and had limited scope for influence as a local government official observed:

> '*an engagement model which led to influence in a limited set of outcomes … limited by the council, because formally all it was doing was devolve a certain set of restricted funding - minor traffic works etc.'* (Senior officer, city council, LGov1-B).

This scope was further reduced under the Coalition government, which reconfigured Local Strategic Partnerships to focus on economic growth, privileging economic over social actors as co-producers of development and signalling a closer alignment with a market-based development model. Sub-local governance institutions were largely retrenched or provided with minimum support, and in Bristol the Neighbourhood Partnerships became more service-oriented, with a limited democratic function, what has been described as the 'hollowing out' of neighbourhood governance through scaling up and budget reduction (Pill and Davies, 2012).

Waves of funding cuts to local authorities have required Bristol City Council to spread staff support to the Neighbourhood Partnerships ever more thinly. By 2013, the fourteen partnership areas (each covering 2-3 electoral wards) were supported by only 7 officers. The structures were in place, but there was little capacity to work with the communities. As one local government officer observed:

> *'What we need to be asking ourselves is, we have this big box called governance, the Neighbourhood Partnership, it is a box, and we have this kind of very little social capital. What we need to do is grow the social capital and minimise the box'* (officer, city council, LGov2-B).

The community development team, based at Bristol City Council, were tasked with supporting the partnerships. At the time of my fieldwork, they were discussing how to initiate a 'power conversation' with communities across the local authority area, but plans were later shelved as the council continues to make cuts. The lack of outreach hollows out these structures, and means that people who need support, who are underserved by public services, or face challenges in their everyday lives, are likely not to be reached. One officer was concerned that the local authority's approach needed rethinking: '*doing **for** people is damaging and undermining, but also abandoning people is undermining*' (*ibid.)*. As of late 2017, the Bristol City Council website informs that 'because of significant financial pressures, we can't continue with the same level of support we've been giving to the Neighbourhood Partnerships and their Neighbourhood Forums. We need to reduce the Neighbourhood Partnership budget by about half in 2017, and remove it altogether by 31 March 2019' (Bristol City Council, 2017).

National volunteering programmes have substituted locally defined governance spaces for citizen participation. Two key programmes are the Community Organisers Programme with a focus on 'deprived neighbourhoods', and the National Citizen Service which is nationwide, and aims to 'develop the skills that employers increasingly value: confidence, leadership and independence' (National Citizen Service, 2018). The Community Organisers Programme was delivered by Locality, a national CSO which used the 'Root Solution, Listening Matters' approach developed by Kearney and Olsen for RE:generate (Shaw and Mayo, 2016). This approach combines Saul Alinsky's movement building principles (Chambers, 2003), with Paulo Freire's critical consciousness-raising pedagogy, in order to listen to, engage and mobilise people in marginalised communities. Between 2011-15, the Community Organisers Programme trained 500 senior community organisers who in turn were tasked with engaging and supporting voluntary community organisers (Cameron *et al.,* 2015). This is significant public-sector support for community development work, given that 500 senior community organisers were employed full time for a year, trained and tasked with activating 4,500 voluntary community organisers (Fisher & Dimberg 2016; Cameron, *et al.,* 2015).

The National Citizen Service (NCS) began as a Big Society initiative, and became an Act of Parliament in April 2017. Through the NCS, government facilitates young people to become 'active members of the community', to participate in 'social action projects', and to change attitudes towards people from different backgrounds (UK Government 2017, 2016). According to the NCS Audit (National Audit Office, 2016), youth volunteering doubled amongst 16-24-year olds, from 14 per cent in 2003 to 34 per cent in 2014.

Both programmes have coincided with massive cuts to local government community and youth services. At the same time, the Local Government Association has expressed concern that the Office for Civil Society has committed £1.26 billion to the NCS for 2016-20, with a cost of £1,863 per young person in 2016 (National Audit Office, 2017). NCS now commands half of the budget for the Office for Civil Society. From a governmentality perspective, the government is extending its influence from the centre to the citizen via these schemes, and side-lining local governance institutions. Furthermore, this approach may increase spatial inequalities, since youth and community funding are most urgently needed in marginalised neighbourhoods, while the NCS is universal. The 'payment by results' requirement of NCS also means that it is likely to target the easier to reach individuals who are 'ready' or easier to reach for this social action programme. Mills and Waite (2017, p.72) find that NCS encourages 'a "type" of citizen that performs "safe" and compliant acts of (youth) citizenship'. This suggests that citizen volunteering through this programme avoids critical engagement with complex issues of inequality and exclusion. As a result, it promotes a depoliticised type of citizenship. This analysis is supported by Gutiérrez, Santiago and Soska's (2016:2) observation that the Community Organisers Programme employs 'the discourse and methods of community practice … in the service of neoliberal goals to reduce government spending and protections'.

The analysis suggests that the investment in these two programmes at the expense of locally defined investments in youth and community services or participatory governance institutions, reflects government's preoccupation with promoting a particular kind of 'active citizenship' with its focus on volunteering in the community, rather than building critical capacities to demand rights and participate in local decision-making. In response to this study's question about the institutional spaces of citizen participation, it finds that these spaces in Bristol are closing, and that citizen participation in governance is replaced with a less politically-oriented social action in the community.

These findings in the England context resonate with the literature which suggests that an impact of neoliberal governmentality is the depoliticisation of citizen action (Hay, 2007; Ferguson, 2010). The implications for marginalised communities, are the closing down of a space in which to voice their concerns about cuts to public services which impact on their community and lives. Citizens can of

course contact their local councillor or Member of Parliament but citizens' awareness of this route, and confidence to use it, is variable, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. The next section considers the local spaces for citizen participation in Matagalpa, and their significance for citizen agency.

Matagalpa: Opening spaces for social action – and Party activism

The Nicaraguan Law of Citizen Participation, passed in 2003, formalised the duty of local authorities to establish a municipal development council, with the participation of citizens and civil society organisations (Howard and Serra Vasquez, 2011; Serra Vasquez, 2008; Prado, 2008). In 2007, the incoming Sandinista Front government passed a decree to radically reshape its relationship with its citizens to enable direct democracy. This would happen through the decentralisation of democratic decision-making to the very local level, via the Community Councils of Citizen Power (CPCs) under the protection of the national government (Decree 112-2007 Article 1, see Box 2, below).

Box 2: Decree 112-2007, Articles 1 and 2

Article 1. The Councils and Cabinets of Citizen Power are created in order that the Nicaraguan people, in the exercise of direct and participatory democracy of the different social sectors of the country, should organize and participate in the integral development of the country in an active and direct manner and support the plans and policies of the President of the Republic which are designed to develop these objectives. Service in these Councils and Cabinets will be entirely voluntary and without payment.

Article 2. The Councils and Cabinets of Citizen Power will be created in the communities, neighbourhoods, districts, municipalities, departments, autonomous regions and at national level.

Source: Government of Nicaragua (2007), my translation

As expressed in Article 2 (Box 2), these councils (CPCs) were intended to be established in every urban neighbourhood and rural district throughout the country. They are conceptualised as the vehicle for direct democracy that embody the notion of 'a people's presidency' and provide a vehicle for a 'Sandinista' (socialist) model of economic, political and social development and organisation. A government respondent explained the vision:

> *'the idea is that millions of people will be Party activists, and members of the Sandinista Front – more than half the Nicaraguan population support the Sandinista Front, even while there are other political parties, other emerging forces, the idea is that the influence of the Sandinista ideology will percolate in every sector, and that's what the model is about' (*National Government advisor, *NGov-2).*

The CPCs (renamed 'Family Cabinets' in 2014, see below) were welcomed by many Sandinistas who had been waiting for a return to the large-scale participation of the 1980s. Respondents active within the structures are enthusiastic about the principles of community participation:

> *'The Family Cabinets aren't just the group of eight people – the Family Cabinet is the whole population, because the population has close communication with the Family Cabinet, so they can come to a meeting and say what problems they're having, and the Family Cabinet committee tells the council what the problems are and how they can be addressed'* (officer, local government, LGov1-M).

But over time, concerns have grown about how Sandinista ideals have translated into partisan functioning, and this is reflected in interviews with national and local civil society respondents - including Sandinistas, members of Family Cabinets, social movement activists and academics. For example, a national civil society leader commented:

> *'the government has created a system of participation which has taken over all spaces and possibilities for participation, but its exclusive – only those who are government supporters get in, everyone else is left out, and there's an instrumental purpose to this system that has turned it into a mechanism for social control'* (leader, national CSO, NCS-3).

While the cabinets were designed to coordinate local voluntary action and as a mechanism for participatory democracy, in practice they operate largely through ruling-party mechanisms to distribute patronage and to gather information in communities. Moreover, the ideological transformation of the CPCs in 2014 to 'Cabinets of the Family, Community and Life' ('Family Cabinets') has meant that the rights principle of the 'citizen power' cabinets is replaced by an odd medley of religious, political and social ideologies: 'inspired in Christian values, socialist ideals and solidary practices' (Nicaraguan National Assembly, 2014, p.30). The 2014 reform brings together a range of laws pertaining to the family under one 'Family Code', differently interpreted by commentators in Nicaragua as '*innovative*' (senior politician, NGov3), or as 'social control' (Jiménez, 2015). A national civil society respondent observed:

> '*they have installed and promoted a system of participation and organisation that doesn't recognise the concept of citizenship. They talk about family and community, and the community substitutes citizenship. This is because the concept of citizenship implies rights, and so of course if you use the concept of citizenship, you're saying to people, you're subject to rights and so you can also claim those rights. Whereas the concept of family and community doesn't correspond to rights'* (director, national research institute, NCS2).

Since the construct of citizenship now includes ideas of community and family which are rooted in conservative Christian as well as socialist values, there is a confusion of concepts, and 'conflicting rationalities' such as Geddes (2014) observes in the Venezuelan community participation structures. Like the Venezuelan model, they mix top-down control with grassroots mobilization, but in Nicaragua add into this mix the involvement of the Catholic Church in these spaces. Christian discourse is harnessed to work together with the State in these spaces, thereby employing governmentality to shape behaviours and attitudes at community level. What emerges is not the progressive discourse of socialist liberation theology that flourished in Central America during the 1970s and 80s, that encouraged citizens (and especially economically and spatially marginalised *campesinos*) to combine faith in God with critical analysis of the structural drivers of the inequalities they experienced. Instead, the current discourse is a conservative and paternalist blend of socialist and Christian doctrine that calls for citizens' gratitude and obedience rather than radical democracy. This is reflected in the observation of the municipal coordinator of a Family Cabinet, for whom the Cabinet is about '*collaborating and participating in development, getting involved and strengthening faith in God*' (coordinator, family cabinet, LGov2-M).

There is also a risk that conservative religious doctrine enacted through partisan mechanisms will further entrench discrimination towards some groups, particularly women and sexual minorities. In Matagalpa, an interinstitutional agreement between the Supreme Court of Justice and the Diocese of Matagalpa has established 'Judiciary Diocesan Facilitators' as mediators in family and community disputes. National human rights and women's organisations (such as the Autonomous Women's Movement of Nicaragua, and the Network of Women against Violence), have highlighted the risk that the interests and rights of women and girls experiencing domestic abuse will be undermined. These organisations however, have suffered persecution by the Sandinista Front government (Heumann, 2014). These tendencies are silencing women, and undermining what had appeared to be progressive legislation to establish equal numbers of women and men in government, according to a Matagalpan research participant:

> *'They say we have gender equality in the ministries and in the National Assembly, but those women don't represent us or defend our rights, which is sad isn't it – how can we exercise our citizenship so that those women who are in positions of power defend our rights, and act as our allies?' (Beatriz, River of Life workshop, Matagalpa).*

The analysis suggests that, while these local institutional spaces of citizenship have proliferated in Nicaragua with an invitation for all citizens to engage in governance and 'direct democracy', additional policies such as the Family Code are also shaping these spaces, with implications for the rights and

voice of some citizens, particularly women. Some scholars find that in certain circumstances, initiatives to build citizen participation at the local level can strengthen democracy (see Chapter Two section 2.3.1). In Nicaragua, while significant resource and energy has been channelled to enable the Family Cabinets to operate at community and municipal levels, their partisan and clientelist functioning undermines their democratic promise. While the implications for marginalised neighbourhoods relative to middle-income neighbourhoods are not clear, it can be surmised that patronage systems that control access to welfare benefits are more difficult to challenge in settings where people are experiencing economic hardship. The perspectives of the co-inquiry group regarding these spaces are discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.2.1).

The next section sums up the significance of these shifts in governance policy for how citizenship is constructed in the two contexts.

Shifting governance and diminishing citizenship

This chapter has found that in England, governance discourse adopts a market logic and constructs an entrepreneurial active citizen who participates in the market and is engaged in social action. In Nicaragua, governance discourse adopts a democracy logic, constructing citizens as empowered through participation in spaces of local governance which, in practice, facilitate Party allegiance. The Nicaraguan discourses of 'citizen power' and direct democracy can be understood as an attempt to distance the Sandinista Front from the Latin American *izquierda permitida* and its associations with neoliberalism (Webber and Carr, 2013, see Chapter 2.3.2). However, they obscure the government's alliances with the private sector, the vested economic interests of some senior politicians, suggesting an accommodation between state and corporations which Crouch (2017) has identified in neoliberal governance as causing the residualisation of citizenship.

According to Wacquant (2012), Farnsworth and Irving (2018) and others (see Chapter 2.3.2), neoliberal governance is likely to take hybrid forms, as the logic of governance interacts with other forces and tendencies. These forms of neoliberal governance shape citizenship in different ways according to context, as illustrated here, as the English market approach, and the Nicaraguan 'thin democracy' approach, following Gaventa's (2010) typology. These approaches fall short of their promise of empowered and active citizenship, because they are supported by policy reforms which offer only conditional access to citizen rights. Discourses in both settings promote the notion of citizens engaging in local development as volunteers, active citizens or participatory subjects. Yet, in practice these are not spaces of democratic content. Civic spaces have been substituted by spaces for social action, with an emphasis on volunteering for the local community (England), or on community organising within Party structures (Nicaragua). This emphasis means that critical citizenship capacities

are not promoted, and critical citizen agency is not encouraged. Furthermore in both settings, spaces for citizen participation extend government rationalities into the community, and shape citizen agency to government's purpose.

Governance scholars have observed in different contexts how government 'invited' spaces instrumentalise participation (Cornwall, 2002; Taylor, 2007; Ferguson, 2010), and in both sites respondents were wary of government intervention in citizen activism. The director of a CSO in Bristol commented:

> *It's paradoxical in a way in that it's trying to impose a grassroots moment from above which you just can't do … Any attempt to generate citizen activism from a government is doomed to failure as citizens will only get active when they want to challenge the government … or when they are pushing for change or have a cause to get behind.* (Director, civil society organisation, LCS1-B).

A respondent close to government in Nicaragua, also recognised this challenge:

> '*the organisational paradigm for citizen participation and action in this country is changing. It's a paradigm that is still changing, still to be defined … and that's the challenge we're facing, how to promote an organisational model for citizen participation that meets the needs and realities of the people, because people have feelings and thoughts and you can't impose a way of organisation on them*' (national government advisor, NGov2).

He went on to comment that 'the government and the Party are aware of this [need to engage with people's feelings and thoughts], and that's part of what Rosario herself is doing'. This respondent is confirming that the daily radio messages from the President's wife (now vice-President) are designed to synthesise the information that is gathered through the Cabinets, but also to influence feelings and thoughts. This interpretation highlights how government discourse, carefully controlled and delivered by the vice-President, can be a powerful technology of governmentality. Through controlling the messaging to the population, and when challenged on rights, keeping silent, the Sandinista Front Government is implementing a strategy that Cupples and Glynn (2018) argue intentionally produces 'public ignorance' in order to evade criticism and consolidate power.

In both of these two very different settings, the state constructs citizenship through policies, discourses and spaces of governmentality, but which are often in tension with each other, or lack coherence. In Nicaragua, policy discourse and spaces promote citizenship in terms of political rights and participation, which are undermined in practice through patronage, the prioritisation of corporate interests over local priorities, and a lack of state accountability. In England, policy discourses promise freedom and fairness for all citizens, and encourage active citizenship. However, these sentiments are

accompanied by the closing down of spaces for civic participation and deliberation, and policies which limit citizens' engagement with governance to depoliticised forms of social action. The final section of this chapter considers further the implications of these discourses and spaces for the type of citizen agency that is made possible.

4.4 How policy discourses and spaces shape citizen agency

The discussion above relates directly to explaining how *citizenship is constructed by the state, and how it is operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua*, and raises questions about *the kind of citizen agency that is enabled.* In Chapter Two, the need to emphasise agency in a governmentality approach was highlighted. This section considers the kind of citizen agency that is understood and promoted by the state in each context.

Rose (1996) has argued that neoliberal governmentality works through discourse which is used to promote certain values, and to encourage their internalisation and the emergence of a certain type of self-governing subject. In England, this self-governing citizen is expected to behave as an individual entrepreneur who is in work or preparing to be 'work ready' and engaged in social action for the benefit of the neighbourhood, in the context of austerity. I suggest that the citizen constructed in England is a version of Isin's (2004) 'bionic citizen': it is a 'heroic moral citizen', set up to do the impossible and against the odds, in the current context of cuts in public services and the tightening of welfare benefits. This heroic citizen must also navigate the additional moralising dimension to these sanctions and discourses that construct the 'good' citizen as being in work, and dependence as failure. In Nicaragua, the heroic citizen is also summoned, and framed as a socialist and collaborative 'protagonist' ready to work alongside the state to combat poverty and unemployment. In this context there is also a moral dimension, as this protagonist must be 'Christian and solidary', and show loyalty to the Party in order to access social and economic rights. In both contexts, governments employ discourse to legitimise and normalise normative citizenship agendas and establish the elements of 'good' (heroic, moral) citizens, in order to harness the energies of 'active citizens' to this agenda, and discipline those who do not conform.

Figure 6: Statues of revolutionary heroes, Matagalpa (Bartolo's Story)

Responsibilisation: the heroic citizen

In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Front's current discourse appeals to the ideals of the revolution of 1979 and the Sandinista revolutionary government's discourse during the 1980s which challenged the country's colonial and Catholic legacy and promoted a sense of citizenship agency:

> '*During the revolution, there was an idea – true or false – that we were constructing citizenship in the sense that people were grasping how to transform their own lives, their own history – I don't know how real that was, but the feeling was real for lots of people […] the idea that change is possible and is not in the hands of destiny or divine design'* (leader, civil society organisation, LCS3M).

This sense of empowerment and agency has been harnessed by the current government in its discourse of 'people's power' and 'protagonist' citizens, which constructs 'the citizen as active and participatory subject' (see Box 1, p.83). In England, the Coalition Government has similarly deployed a positive narrative about 'active citizens', empowered to work alongside a small 'enabling' state and the market, and promised the devolution of powers and resources 'from state agencies to active individuals and communities' (Cabinet Office, 2010). Its discourse on social enterprise also makes links between active citizens, civil society and economic growth: 'A vibrant civil society can also make a big contribution to economic growth and better public services' (Cabinet Office, 2015).

Citizens are set free in this discourse, to step in as the state retreats. This heroic individual has the energy, time and assets to set up a free school or a social enterprise, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods. The emphasis on entrepreneurialism overlooks the hardships and multiple inequalities that many citizens living in marginalised communities, face in their daily lives. Critiquing the tone and approach of the government's discourse on civil society, a local government respondent

observed, *'the minister thinks active citizens are middle class do-gooders'* (senior officer, city council, LGov1-B).

The English active citizen (or heroic entrepreneur) who volunteers in their community, must also be in work, or actively seeking work. This seems challenging, given the increase in in-work poverty (Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2015), and the emphasis on getting into employment which has meant that people are likely to be pushed into low-wage, short-term work (National Audit Office, 2016). Furthermore, there is a lack of acknowledgement of the isolation or other everyday challenges that many experience, and hence an assumption that, given the opportunity, people will be able to take up opportunities to be active citizens. The social entrepreneur/volunteer construct relies on the agency of those citizens who are already active, even while volunteering is seen as a way of empowering (and a route into employment) for those who are disadvantaged:

> *'Libraries are looking for volunteers, parks, everywhere you look, some aspect of public service is looking for volunteers to run its service. And at the same time, there are fewer jobs, and more people coming out into society with say drug and alcohol problems, or coming out of prison, ex-offenders, or people with English not as their first language, who want to get into work through a volunteering route. More people who are coming into volunteering have support needs. So there's a tension in that the voluntary sector are expected to supply more supported volunteering places, and the active engaged volunteers who don't need support are being sucked into the other kinds of social action volunteering such as running libraries, school governor' (Leader, civil society organisation, LCS3B).*

This view is supported by the Poverty Truth Commission (2015) which points out that '[a]s a culture we celebrate self-starters but overlook the real achievement of overcoming everyday obstacles – entrepreneurialism that goes unrecognised'. Austerity measures which have cut community outreach services are undermining this discourse of active citizens, particularly in marginalised neighbourhoods where the need for these public services is more acute.

In contrast, the Nicaraguan active citizen is not constructed as an economic entrepreneur, instead as a heroic protagonist of the ongoing revolution. Yet, according to the language of Decree 112, this citizen must be ready to 'combat the poverty and unemployment inherited from former administrations'. This economic agenda is fused with their democratic mandate, to be actively involved in 'effective governing' through 'direct democracy' (See Box 2, p.101). In its discourse, the Nicaraguan state claims a new social contract with its 'protagonist citizens', and in practice delivers in some respects; however, in a muddled socialist participatory and liberal economic agenda, the Nicaraguan state has accommodated corporate interests. Despite adopting the indigenous language

of *buen vivir* to exhort citizens to '*vivir bien, vivir bonito'* (live well, live nicely – see 4.2.2), the Sandinista Front Government has suppressed protests organised by indigenous communities, and permitted multi-national companies to push into indigenous lands and protected areas of rainforest:

> *'The government has made an alliance with the elites, who claim to represent and dialogue with these groups, but the indigenous groups aren't listened to, the problem of Bosawas is not being heard'* (Leader, national civil society organisation NCS5).

Such contradictions between government discourse and practice relating to *buen vivir* have been highlighted in other Latin American contexts (see for example, Radcliffe, 2012; Sandbrook, 2014; Thomas, 2017), and suggest that Nicaragua is maintaining neoliberal extractivist policies that exploit natural resources especially in indigenous territories, while promoting the *buen vivir* discourse of a 'social and solidary' economy (Thomas, 2017).

This is confirmed by events during the fieldwork period in Nicaragua (2014-16), when a number of protest marches were suppressed by police or the army. An example is the case of B2Gold, a Canadian mining company whose permit to exploit resources in Rancho Grande was opposed by the local community because of concerns about damage to the environment and their livelihoods (La Prensa, 2015). The government deployed police and armed forces to protect the interests of multinational investors over the concerns of local communities (interviews with leaders of civil society organisations LCS1-M and LCS2-M in 2015; see also Thaler, 2017). The Sandinista Front Government's response to the 'protagonism' of these communities undermines the legitimacy of their discourse of the 'active and participatory subject'. Government support for citizen agency in this context is therefore conditional on conforming to the government's notion of the participatory subject, and of appropriate fields for citizen action.

Responsibilisation: the moral citizen

Governmentality theorists argue that neoliberal governmentality takes a characteristically 'moral' form (Rose and Miller, 1992), which produces discourses which construct ideas of the 'good citizen', such as the European citizen who is a 'liberal, white, bourgeois, heterosexual, man' which 'inherently leads to the powerful hierarchisation and securitisation of others' (Turner *et al.*, 2013), (see Chapter 2, p29). The analysis in this chapter of the English Welfare Reform Act and associated policies and discourses, supports these theories and suggests that there is evidence of the moralisation of the citizen who wishes to claim social and economic rights, and a hierarchisation of those who are more or less eligible, more or less worthy of government support, or who should be sanctioned. The lack of attention to the social divisions which influence people's access to these services and to other welfare rights, is likely to privilege the 'low hanging fruit', as Shutes and Taylor (2014) have argued.

This strand in the literature also argues that governmentalities have a pedagogic dimension – they educate and responsibilise citizens (Rose, 1999; Newman, 2010). This is evident in the English discourse where it is the individual's responsibility to get on, find work, and solve their own problems (self-care), and to volunteer in order to improve the local community. The discourse is also punitive, as articulated by Prime Minster Cameron in an article for the Manchester Evening News (UK Government 2010b), which identifies benefit reforms as the first target for 'reducing our deficit':

> 'The first port of call in cutting spending is to stop paying money to people who shouldn't receive it. Cutting fraud and bureaucracy in welfare should be the first and deepest cut that we will make'.

This resonates with Edmiston and Humpage's (2018) finding that increasingly punitive welfare regulations create an environment of hostility towards benefits claimants. Citizens must overcome this prevailing state discourse which constructs claimants as fraudsters.

In contrast to this English construct of the (im)moral individualised citizen, the citizen in Nicaragua is shaped by a moral discourse of family, community and church: The strong citizens' rights and empowerment discourse in Nicaragua has been progressively undermined by paternalist and gender-regressive policies. When the CPCs were absorbed into the new Family Code in 2014, one of their objectives became:

> 'to apply the model of Christian, socialist and solidary values that dignify and procure protagonism, capacities, responsibilities, duties and rights and more arenas of complementary participation and decision-making in all spheres of life' (Decree 43-2014, Government of Nicaragua).

Citizen agency is constructed as based in, and emanating from, religious, family and community values, while the definition of community remains vague and somewhat mystical: Cabinets are

> 'organized with people, women, men, and young and elderly persons who live in a community in order to reflect and work together, promoting family values and unity; self-esteem and esteem; responsibility; rights and duties; communication; coexistence; understanding and community spirit so as to achieve consistency between what is, what is thought and what is done' (*ibid*.).

This matches the tone of the Vice-President's daily speeches on the official television and radio channels. The shift from the radical rhetoric of citizen power to 'community spirit' and 'family values', reflects the growing incursion of conservative values and social control into citizen participation.

The good citizen in Nicaragua is portrayed as altruistic, Christian and patriotic. In England the 'good' entrepreneurial citizen is a counterpoint to negative discourses about 'benefit fraudsters' and 'troubled families' (labels which were popularised in the press after Prime Minister Cameron's public statements). In England, discourse is employed as a technology to paint a picture of the good citizen as an entrepreneurial volunteer who contributes to the community and does not rely on the state. According to Baumberg et al (2012) and Lundström (2013), this also has the effect of encouraging the stigmatisation of people who need additional support. While the English discourse appears to aim to reduce citizens' reliance on the state, the Nicaraguan discourse aims to bring citizens into the state's project. The Nicaraguan government uses the active citizenship discourse to marshal existing community-based efforts into a single mechanism which can be managed, incentivised and directed from the Presidency. The Nicaraguan construct of citizen agency is less individualistic than the English construct, but equally moralising, as it charges citizens with demonstrating Christian, socialist and solidary values. In both contexts, citizens must prove themselves worthy, either by showing their probity and readiness for work in the English disciplinary system, or by showing their commitment to the Party in the paternalist Nicaraguan system.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how citizenship is constructed by the state through policies which impact on citizens' rights, in spaces of citizen participation which shape citizens' access to rights, and through discourses which articulate certain kinds of acceptable citizen behaviour. In both England and Nicaragua, the incoming governments (Coalition in 2010, Sandinista Front in 2007) launched discourses which connected ideas of citizenship rights and practices to a set of ideological ideals and projects. Despite the different contexts and discourses, there is a new conditionality attached to citizen rights in both contexts: in England, social and economic benefits are available to citizens upon certain conditions, which construct citizenship in terms of individual responsibility to be economically active. In Nicaragua, while the construct is inclusive, there is in practice the condition of party membership and loyalty, which contribute to clientelism and not empowered citizenship, because of their discretionary selection and distribution processes. This is a shift in the organising principle of welfare from rights to conditionality which has been observed as a feature of neoliberal governmentality (Dwyer, 2004; Shutes and Taylor, 2014).

Both discourses construct an ideal citizen to be protagonist in the national project, and both governments recognise the importance of reconceptualising citizenship, in order to steer these projects using the power of discourse. In both settings, discourse is used to promote certain citizen values and behaviours. While the kind of citizen that is articulated in these two national policy settings is quite different, in both cases government seeks to control and shape citizens' behaviour. There is evidence of the desire to control citizen participation mechanisms as vehicles of a national project, and to neutralise CSOs as an alternative mechanism for citizen voice and influence. In both contexts, governance spaces and discourses extend the power of the state into the community and shape the kind of citizen that policy recognises and enables. This creates a '*tension at its heart over who has control'* (local government officer, Bristol LGov1-B), with central government exerting control despite the appearance of devolution.

The kind of citizen agency that is promoted is moralised, and space for contestation is shrinking in both contexts, as citizen participation is discouraged in its advocacy and protest forms. In England, the gagging law reduces the possibilities for citizens to raise their voices via CSOs; and 'social action' is supported through programmes which channel civic action into depoliticised 'social action' projects which do not question whether government policies are perpetuating inequalities. In Nicaragua, there is a tension between the socialist discourse of citizen 'protagonists' working together with the state, and government actions which have suppressed protests in favour of multi-national and business elite interests. When spaces for contestation are disallowed, alternative voices are marginalised from public debate and governance.

A strand of the citizenship literature conceptualises citizenship as constructed through subjectivities and contestation, as well as through policy discourses and spaces (see 2.4). Chapter Five draws on the participatory research conducted with the co-inquiry groups in Bristol and Matagalpa, to explore how people experience their citizenship according to their different subjectivities.

Chapter Five Experiences of citizenship in the intersections of rights, identities and marginalisation

This study explores how citizenship is understood and practised by citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua. Chapter Four discussed how the state uses the technologies of discourse and space to shape understandings and practices of citizenship in England and Nicaragua. This chapter draws on the participatory data and analysis gathered through the co-inquiry processes in Matagalpa and Bristol, to explore *the lived experience of citizenship,* and *the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua*. In particular, the participatory research process facilitated their exploration of feelings of citizenship in relation to exclusion, identity and belonging.

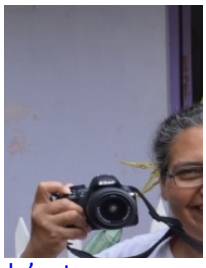
This chapter considers citizenship from the perspective of citizens themselves. The analysis of the findings is structured to enable the co-researchers' perspectives to compare and contrast with theories of citizenship as rights and identities as discussed in Chapter Two (Marshall, 1950; Mouffe, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 1999; Kabeer, 2005; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Lister, 2013; Shutes and Taylor, 2014; Pettit, 2016; Samov & Yishai, 2018; see sections 2.2 and 2.4). Section 5.1 considers how co-researchers experience their citizenship in terms of rights, and the policies and discourses which shape experiences of political and social citizenship. Section 5.2 examines how citizenship is experienced as belonging, in the formal and informal spaces of citizenship. Section 5.3 discusses how the co-researchers' experiences of citizenship are shaped by their identities, and through their emotions. Citizenship as agency and contestation, is the focus of Chapter Six.

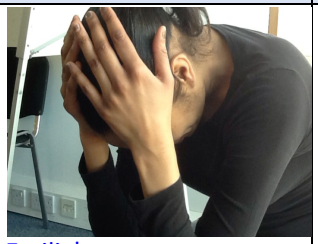
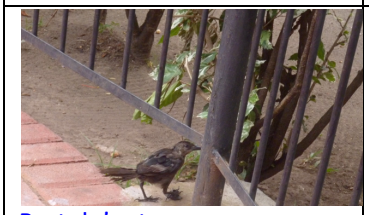
While Chapter Four drew on policy documents, published reports, websites and qualitative interviews with government officials and stakeholder organisations, this chapter draws on the data generated using participatory research methods. Through these methods, co-researchers iteratively surfaced, reflected on, and analysed their own experiences of citizenship. The data take a range of forms (word-based, image-based, audio and visual) and were shared and analysed in the different moments of the participatory research processes in Bristol and Matagalpa. Table 7 introduces the co-researchers who completed the process, and whose voices feature in this Chapter. The co-researchers signed the consent forms (see Appendices A4, A7, A9), and during the process they chose to include their names and photos of themselves in their digital stories, and did not ask for anonymity (except Colin). However, at the end of the process, they did not wish to publish their stories on an open access site on the internet. Two of the Bristol group said they would like to share their stories with the local

community organisation, and make them available to others experiencing the issues they have faced. One of the Matagalpa group planned to show their story to colleagues.

Therefore, their digital stories will not be included in the final published version of this thesis. They are made available to the examiners only, via a password protected link. An anonymised transcript of each story is included in the appendices, and the co-researchers have been assigned pseudonyms in this thesis. This could be viewed as a paternalist move on my part to decide to protect their identities, but I feel it is the best ethical option, particularly for the Nicaraguan group since current events in Nicaragua mean that there is a heightened risk to them if they have been critical of government policies and practices. In addition to the stories and analysis of the co-researchers, quotes are included from two additional Nicaraguan participants who attended the first workshop, but did not complete a digital story and are not included in Table 7.

Table 7: The co-researchers

Matagalpa, Nicaragua		Bristol, England	
 Lola's story	Lola 54 yr-old woman, single. Teacher. Living with disability. Lives alone.	 Colin's story	Colin 70+ yr old man, retired, single, lives alone.
 Rosa's story	Rosa 30 yr-old woman, single, 11-yr old son, works part-time in a factory sorting beans. Lives alone with her son.	 Alfie's story	Alfie 65 yr-old man, retired, cares for partner, volunteers with AA and previously with local community partnership.
 Carolina's story	Carolina 32-yr old woman, married with 2 children (7, 10), youth representative on local Family Cabinet. Lives with husband and children.	 Samira's story	Samira 40 yr-old woman, married with 3 children, originally Somali, came to England as asylum seeker. Lives with husband and children.

Matagalpa, Nicaragua		Bristol, England	
 Maria's story	Maria 49-yr old woman, divorced, 3 children, 2 grandchildren. Pre-school teacher, volunteer with local organisation. Lives with daughter and grand-daughter.	 Emilia's story	Emilia 31 yr-old woman, single, 2 yr old son. Lives alone with her son.
 Bartolo's story	Bartolo 23-yr old man, single, student, LGBT activist. Lives with his mother and other family members in an extended family household.	 Jack's story	Jack 70+ yr old man, retired, divorced. Children and grandchildren. Lives alone.
 Ximena's story	Ximena 32 yr-old woman, single, 6 yr-old daughter, psychologist, works with local government. Lives alone with her daughter.		

5.1 Citizenship experienced as rights

5.1.1 Experiences of political rights

This section considers the extent to which the co-researchers experience their citizenship in terms of rights. Commonly understood as conveying legal status and entitlements within a national boundary, in this research citizenship as political rights was not explicitly referred to by many of the co-researchers in the two settings. However, it was a feature in the stories of those who had experienced deprivation of these rights. Lola describes her experience of participating in the revolution in Nicaragua, and the great importance she attached to acquiring a national identity and the right to vote; these aspects of citizenship having been denied under the previous dictatorship:

> *'I got my first identity card as a Nicaraguan citizen and voted for the first time in open elections in 1984. It wasn't that having an ID card, or the act of voting, made me feel like a citizen. I felt like a citizen when I saw the fruits of all our efforts – to gain the right to have an identity card,*

and to identify ourselves as Nicaraguan, and to be able to vote for our leaders' (Lola, digital story, Matagalpa).

Figure 7: Mural depicting the Nicaraguan flag, on the side of the Police Station (Ximena's Story)

Samira's story of coming to the UK as an asylum seeker highlights the ultimate loss of citizenship experienced through civil war, and the need to acquire status within a new nation state:

> *'I had a key worker and she helped me understand my rights and how to get access to social services. After this I got indefinite right to stay in the UK. Then I could get a GP and other services'* (Samira, digital story, Bristol).

Their accounts suggest that the importance of legal status and political rights is more likely to be recognised when they have been denied. Lola at 54 years old is the oldest in the Nicaraguan group. She had joined the resistance to the dictatorship as a teenager in the 1970s and celebrated the new democracy as a young adult who remembered the repression of Somoza's regime. Samira vividly remembers fleeing the destruction and carnage of civil war in Somalia, and the complete loss of rights and security she experienced when she became nationless. While these are both extreme examples, they are the personal experiences of at least one person in each of the research groups, and therefore significant.

The findings also highlight how spatial and economic marginalisation impact on political citizenship. In both settings, experiencing and defending rights is made more difficult by poverty. According to the Nicaraguan group, political citizenship is undermined by economic and spatial marginalisation in people's everyday lives:

> '*those of us who are here have had the good fortune to learn a bit about citizenship and rights, but people who live in remote communities … citizenship isn't a priority for them, there are people who don't have enough to eat … their priority is food, not to ask 'what does it mean to be a citizen?', not even 'do I want an identity card?'; they're thinking about clean water, basic*

services, so in Nicaragua citizenship isn't an integral need because there are other more urgent priorities' (Beatriz, Rivers of Life workshop, Matagalpa).

For Beatriz, the experience of citizenship is undermined when people have to prioritise survival, and political citizenship becomes a luxury, which indicates that citizenship is differentiated by economic status. She also observes that people's citizenship is compromised when *'they don't have a voice, they don't know their rights and so they can't defend them'* (*ibid.*). Her experience is that rights are not automatic, but need to be actively defended, and when people do not know their rights, and have urgent basic needs to meet, they are less able to take on such activity. This suggests that political citizenship is shaped by experiences of social and civic rights – that they are interconnected. When social and civic citizenship rights cannot be fully enjoyed, then political citizenship cannot be practised.

Lola: *I was wondering how to focus my story.*

Jo: *Let's see what people suggest.*

Ximena: *Her story struck me … its similar to what we've all been thinking isn't it? But I don't know how to suggest any changes, I think she's done the work, thinking it through for herself. I just want to say that what she has said has really struck me, it really has.*

Bartolo: *It's like, maybe a combination of what the revolution was for her, what she got from that, and she could make a comparison about when she felt more or less like a citizen.*

Lola: *For me, the revolution only lasted 10 years, and what we have now isn't revolution.*

Bartolo: *More like disillusionment, and less citizenship. But in your story you need a thread that runs through it, like a time line. I like the part about the context of the revolution I like the way you talk about three types of age, and I would be like the second generation post-war, and the first generation post-war really did experience the war, and that's something that we have in common, at least my generation really feels the repercussions of that war, maybe not so much the war, as the poverty, the widespread poverty of the dictatorship, which we all experienced. So a timeline connects these things … it's important.*

Lola: *So, how I felt as a citizen before the revolution, during it, and how I feel as a citizen now?*

Joel: *We shouldn't lose perspective about the context, we each live our own experience and shouldn't compare them, but we need to understand the context. The generation pre-1990s lived through a longer process of identity formation because the process we lived through forced us to lose our own identities in order to form a collective identity, because that was the philosophy of the system, of the revolution, but in the process you realised that this construction of collective identity meant that we had to suppress our individual freedoms and rights. Thinking about this process is painful too, you realise how you felt manipulated as a person.*

Bartolo: *I'm always positive, I don't want to feel like a victim, we need to be able to tell our stories or citizenship without becoming victims. Things won't just come to us, the right to education is a universal right if you have it then take care of it, if you don't have it then look for it, being a citizen means that you have to constantly look after these resources.*

Box 3: Dialogue between co-researchers: workshop to develop digital stories, Matagalpa

In England, research participants spoke of how navigating poverty and surviving on benefits can mean that speaking out about rights may be counterproductive, as it may jeopardise opportunities for employment or economic benefit. Policies which have benefited employers by reducing their responsibilities towards low-wage employees (e.g. zero hours contracts), are eroding people's sense of their rights, according to the director of a community-based organisation in Bristol (see also Chapter 4.2.2):

> *'You never hear of people talking about rights they might have as workers in employment any more … they're just so fearful about losing their jobs and the complications that causes, and then being sanctioned for things they don't understand, and having no money'* (director, community organisation, Bristol).

In both settings, when citizens have to navigate economic hardship, their capacity access or demand rights is compromised. This suggests that the active citizenship/citizen power discourses are unlikely to resonate with those who are dealing with marginalisation.

5.1.2 Experiences of social rights

Chapter Four discussed how government discourses and practices in England construct a *conditional* social citizenship. A feature of English welfare policy discourse discussed in Chapter Four is that it emphasises economic activity (through benefits-related pressures and sanctions) as a condition for accessing social rights, and the shift of responsibility for wellbeing to the individual. This shift is evident in the story of Jack, an older man in the Bristol group. His story of citizenship highlights the centrality of being in work to his sense of identity and belonging:

> '*Working life began at 15, as a plumber's assistant. Fetching materials, cleaning tools, and being helpful. Apprenticeship began at age 16 and lasted until age 21. I learned to be a heating and domestic engineer pipe fitter. Over my working life I had seven employers. Working full time till age 69 and part time until 73. That was an interesting and very varied time. On retiring, I thought isolation and lonely living would not suit after the activities of work and the fellowship that goes with it' (*Jack, Digital Story, Bristol).

Figure 8: The 'fellowship' of work, Jack's story

Jack's sense of worth gained through his work, and the sense of personal fulfilment as well as social recognition he gains through employment, do not come as easily to others. As an older retired man, he looks back at a life of stable employment, while many young people now are faced with the uncertainty of zero hours contracts. People with caring responsibilities and especially single parents face additional challenges. Emilia, who is a young single mother, expresses a positive work-related identity early in her story:

> *'As a full-time working woman, I felt accepted, confident, and able to participate in society. I was paying my taxes, contributing to society, and enjoying life'* (Emilia, Digital Story, Bristol).

However, after falling pregnant unexpectedly, she has to leave her job, and as a single unemployed mother she needs to claim benefits. This situation led to an inversion of her former positive sense of identity as a working woman. Instead, she expresses feelings of internalised blame:

> '*I felt I was not going to be able to provide and be a good mum, as I was now on benefits. I felt like I was taking from society and not contributing, which went against my principles*' (*ibid*).

Emilia does not talk of receiving benefits as a right attached to her status as a citizen, and even sees her status as benefits claimant as detrimental to her capacity to be a good mother. This is an illustration of the stigma attached to receiving 'benefits' in the English context, driven by the neoliberal discourse that celebrates active (i.e. not dependent) citizens, and the absence of a discourse which frames welfare as a right (see Chapter 4.2.2). This resonates with Baumberg *et al.*'s (2012) finding that in England the dominant discourse casts benefits claimants as undeserving (see Chapter 2.5.3).

This internalisation of responsibility is an important characteristic of neoliberal governmentality, which operates here through discourse to shape ideas about welfare rights. It is a particular feature of the English context, in which participants frequently expressed a reluctance to 'take', or to be 'dependent', which suggests the internalisation of a negative welfare narrative. Emilia's experience

also illustrates individual responsibilisation. The company that managed her benefits suspected 'benefit fraud' and immediately suspended payment to her, without checking with her first, leaving Emilia struggling to feed herself and her 2-year-old. She observed that employees would get treated with greater respect than benefits claimants:

> *'I can't control it, it's out of my hands. If I was working, at the end of the month my wage is going to be in my account … they're not going to stop it the day I'm supposed to be paid, and lie to me and send me a letter a week after saying it's been stopped'* (Emilia, interview, Bristol).

A previous tenant of her flat had fraudulently registered to claim benefits at her address. She tries repeatedly to contact the company to clear her name or talk to a person who will take responsibility. It becomes her individual responsibility to find a way to access her social rights, rather than the duty of the state to guarantee them. This is an illustration of how the involvement of a private sector company in delivering social welfare – a core responsibility of the state – depoliticises the citizen's relationship with the state. Moreover, it pushes this relationship into an area in which the accountability of the provider is unclear.

Chapter Four discussed how in Nicaragua, discourses and practices construct social citizenship as *patronage*. Formal employment is scarce, and social welfare benefits are limited to programmes such as Zero Hunger, which target extreme poverty, or for jobs, scholarships and opportunities, all of which are managed through the Family Cabinets. Often, job applications or education grants, require a letter of endorsement from the Cabinet coordinator, who is almost always the local Party secretary:

> *'If you want a job in the public sector, you have to go through the Party …even if you want a job in the private sector, I'm seeing that you also need approval from the Party structures, you need the letter of endorsement, and the mayor himself has to agree that you can go for that job, you see. So it doesn't make sense, your experience isn't worth anything, it's not recognised'* (Sandinista Youth representative in Family Cabinet LCS4-M).

> '*If a kid wants to study and wants a grant they send you to the person responsible for youth [in the Community Family Cabinet] to ask him to give a guarantee that the kid belongs to the Party and is an active member'* (Carolina, DST workshop, Matagalpa).

This illustrates how the patronage discussed in Chapter Four, plays out for the Nicaraguan co-researchers as corruption and clientelism in their experience of accessing their social rights. It also becomes clear through the stories that the co-researchers recognise that social rights are not given or 'restored' as suggested in government discourse, but have to be fought for, like political rights:

> *'when we went to report a crime of violence, the person that was taking down the information sets you apart to re-victimise you, they make you look guilty, you were the guilty one you provoked it and things like that'* (Bartolo, interview, Matagalpa).

This contrasts with the discourse in both settings which claims that the government will 'restore rights', and suggests that citizenship as rights requires agency to realise these rights. As Maria explains, '*being a citizen is when I have my documents and citizenship **and** when I exercise my rights, my values and my culture'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa). Agency that challenges power however, is likely to be repressed either overtly, or covertly through technologies that control and channel people's agency. Indeed, the sense of full citizenship that Lola experienced on gaining her citizen ID, is clearly lost when, later in her story, she tells of how she was expelled from the governing Party, and from her job:

> *'This happened because I had blown the whistle about some wrong-doings that the government was committing. I felt like my citizen's rights had been cancelled. I wasn't allowed to leave [the country] – Nicaragua became my jail for a year'* (Lola, digital story, *Matagalpa*).

The connections between political and social citizenship, agency and contestation are further explored in Chapter Six.

In conclusion, many of the experiences of citizens expressed in these digital stories are not of restored rights, but of the *loss* of social or political rights, frustration that rights are not easily accessible to them, or that corruption is not addressed. These accounts demonstrate that a fuller understanding of citizenship rights is necessary to understand processes of differentiation. In some of the stories of citizenship, state coercion or violent repression has been experienced, when the state controls movements (for example, Lola is not allowed to leave the country), or violently represses (e.g. Samira's experience in Somalia). These are moments when instruments of governmentality (policies, discourses, spaces) have failed to shape and control citizens' behaviour in more subtle ways, and are substituted by state coercion or repression. More often though, the dynamics shaping meanings and practices of citizenship in marginalised settings are hidden, invisible and normalised. These dynamics are discussed in the next section.

5.2 Citizenship as belonging and participating in a place

Through their stories, the co-researchers in both the English and Nicaraguan sites articulate what it is to feel like a citizen, or to feel excluded. The findings suggest that belonging is fundamental to feeling like a citizen, yet most of the co-researchers expressed feelings of *not* belonging. The dynamics that shape these feelings of marginalisation are discussed here with reference to place and spatial disadvantage, and in the following section (5.3) with relation to identity. The findings of the two inquiry groups suggest that the process of marginalisation operates in formal and informal ways, and in both public and private spheres. It can undermine the sense of belonging that is associated with citizenship, and which involves relationships within a space or locality. Belonging and participating in a place are discussed here firstly in terms of participation in institutional spaces of citizen participation (5.2.1); and secondly in terms of more informal interactions in the community (5.2.2).

Figure 9: The importance of place, Samira's story

The literature in Chapter Two identified space as both a physical location and a site in which power dynamics are operating (e.g. Cornwall, 2002; Taylor, 2011). Institutional spaces of citizen participation are viewed by some to offer democratic potential for co-governance or co-production (Fung and Wright, 2003; Bovaird, 2007); or by others to extend the control of the state into the locality (Carmel and Harlock, 2008). How spaces of citizenship are experienced by the co-researchers in this study, is discussed in the following sections.

Figure 10: The importance of place, Carolina's story

5.2.1 Institutional spaces of citizen participation: formal spaces and informal dynamics

Chapter Four discussed how, in both settings, government creates spaces for citizen voice and participation, and how these settings are shaped by discourses of 'active citizenship' and 'citizen power', but also constrained by the depoliticised volunteering model in England, and the partisan functioning of the CPCs in Nicaragua (see 4.3.1). Spaces of citizenship participation are referred to by the co-researchers in both sites. In Chapter Four, it was demonstrated how in both sites, government discourse constructs these spaces as opportunities for participation and empowerment. However, in Nicaragua, a lack of trust in authority to wield power justly, is strongly expressed by the co-researchers. Their views are particularly strong, perhaps because of their greater expectations, which have led to greater disenchantment. The promise of co-governance and 'citizen power' that was extended by the Sandinista Front in its discourse and legislation, is far from their everyday experience:

> *'The use and abuse of power is common in the spaces we have been in and live in … feeling unsafe in a school, in a workplace, feeling unsafe and having to watch your back at different levels in case you're not satisfying the whims of whoever has the power, be they your boss, or your teacher or the government'* (Bartolo, analysis workshop, Matagalpa).

> *'Let's be honest. Those people I saw dressed in olive green on the 19th of July in the Square in Managua [the triumph of the Revolution], it's the same people who are the oligarchs of today and I say, what happened to what we fought for? Remember, that's what makes me feel powerless, because I can't change it'* (Lola, DST workshop, Matagalpa).

Their accounts articulate their experience of the corruption, patronage, and party politics discussed in Chapter Four. Their experience is that, not only is power not shared with them, it is abused by those

who hold it. They see and feel this abuse of power, and it has consequences for their sense of agency (see 6.1), and leads to feelings of disempowerment and alienation. The implications are low levels of trust in political processes, amongst marginalised citizens.

Some of the co-researchers in England had experience of participating in governance spaces during the previous government, such as a housing committee or a regeneration partnership. None had attended a Neighbourhood Partnership or Neighbourhood Forum meeting. Three of the Matagalpan co-researchers had participated in Family Cabinets, and one (Carolina) is currently active as the representative of young people in her neighbourhood Cabinet.

In their stories, the co-researchers gave some positive accounts of what they have been able to achieve through acting in these spaces, such as coordination with government institutions, negotiating services that are needed in the neighbourhood; getting resources for the block or neighbourhood.

> *'I became a member of the housing committee … I decided I could also help look after the environment in the area. Bristol City Council did not always approve. We argued with them. We usually got our way in the end'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).
>
> '*Together we can achieve things in the community which are good for everyone: drains, electricity cables, drinking water, paving of the main streets, bridges in key points where the water runs, and all these in coordination with government institutions'* (Lola, digital story, Matagalpa).

For governance spaces to fulfil their democratic promise, they need to channel people's views and concerns to decision-makers. In Bristol however, the spaces operate at levels that are distant from people's everyday lives (a Neighbourhood Partnership area covers three electoral wards) and are accessed only by a few. None of the co-researchers in Bristol knew of the more grassroots Community Organisers Programme, nor the National Citizen Service (although none were in the relevant 15-17-year-old age bracket required for the latter).

While they were not aware of the Community Organisers Programme, they were all aware of the local community organisation, whose community engagement worker had contacted them on my behalf to invite them to participate in this research. This worker knocks on doors around the neighbourhood, as do the COP organisers, and encourages people to attend an activity at the centre. If needed, she will accompany them to help them overcome the anxiety of the first visit. Activities include a lunch club for older people, a family centre for parents with pre-school children, English language classes, and a range of sessions and support for dealing with benefits and debt. Jack, Alfie and Colin attend the lunch club; Samira and Emilia attend the family centre. This is the key space in their neighbourhood

for them to interact with people and access advice and training. While it is not a formal space for citizen participation or linked into spaces of decision-making, it provides spaces in which people can find support to overcome some of the barriers to citizenship identified in this chapter.

The significance of their engagement with this organisation is discussed further in Chapter Six, with relation to citizen agency. Here, it is important to note that the organisation acts as a proxy space of citizenship, in which people who are experiencing marginalisation – expressed as isolation, fear, shame etc – can build their confidence and a sense of belonging. Given that the participants were accessed through this organisation, their knowledge and appreciation of it is not surprising. However, they indicate that it plays a role that is of enormous value to them, a role which might be provided by another organisation or by government programmes but, as discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.3.1), these organisations are being dismantled by central government policies towards the sector, and government funding for community development and outreach activities has been cut year on year.

In contrast, the Nicaraguan government has established and resourced an impressive architecture for citizen participation, with the Family Cabinet structure building up from the community level to the Vice-Presidency. Family Cabinet meetings take place regularly at neighbourhood level, which is usually within walking distance. This proximity is an important feature of participatory governance that is missing in Bristol now that 'neighbourhood' partnerships each cover an area of two or three wards, which makes them physically more inaccessible, but also more removed from people's daily lives. In Matagalpa, neighbourhoods elect representatives to the community Cabinet, and there are positions assigned to ensure a range of interests and representations, including women and young people. Chapter Four cited the view of an ex-Cabinet member who clearly felt strongly that the Cabinet was an effective mechanism for the community to get their concerns heard by the local authority (see 4.3.2). However, the in-depth interviews provide accounts of how access to the spaces is mediated by people's relationship with the ruling party. Sara joined the Family Cabinet with great enthusiasm to take up a role as community counsellor. She was deeply disillusioned when she discovered that she was expected to work for the Party, not for the community:

> '*I was so happy because that was what I had studied and wanted to do, but I went to the first meeting [of the Cabinet] where they told me that we would be carrying out activities to raise awareness about the upcoming elections. So, I resigned … there are no roles in the Cabinet now, only Party work' (Sara, interview, Matagalpa).*

Her response was to question the government discourse around citizenship, which she felt had deceived her, to the point where she declares '*citizen power is the biggest lie'* (Sara, *ibid*). The spaces and processes for access to welfare are managed at community level by party cadre, who can choose

who to put forward for the programmes which introduces discretion and clientelism. Another co-researcher put it in this way: *'so if the kid doesn't belong to the Party, he can't study, so how is it that the grants aren't for all the people? This isn't any kind of citizenship'* (Carolina, DS workshop, Matagalpa).

Voscur, Bristol's support and development agency for the voluntary and community sector, supported a working group to conduct a review of Neighbourhood Partnerships in 2012. This review found that the lack of staff capacity, inadequate communications and links into a city-wide forum, meant that the partnerships lacked real political engagement (Voscur, 2012). The mechanism is currently under review again, and due to lose all funding with the next round of cuts in the City Council. The promise of citizen participation is undermined when there is no funding commitment to support this participation. It is consequently not surprising that none of the Bristol co-researchers had participated in a neighbourhood forum or partnership meeting.

While in Bristol the structures are being overstretched and hollowed out, losing touch with the realities of everyday citizens' lives in marginalised areas, in the Nicaraguan examples, the neighbourhood structure exists in almost every neighbourhood across the country, and are easily accessible. However, there is evidence of the state intervening in citizens' lives through these spaces of citizen participation, and less evidence of how these spaces enable marginalised citizens to shape decision-making. In neither case do these mechanisms create spaces in which citizens are adequately encouraged and supported to deliberate on local issues or to hold government to account, which reduces the political citizenship that is likely to be generated through these spaces (see 6.3). How 'community' is constructed as a space of citizenship, and how the co-researchers' experience this informal site of citizenship, is discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 Citizenship and the informal space of 'community'

Continuing with the question of how citizens experience spaces of citizenship, in Chapter Two the community was discussed as a site of governmentality, and Rose's (1996, p.352) argument was advanced, that governmental rationalities extend into the community and are internalised by people as they participate 'in a whole variety of locales and localities – enterprises, associations, neighbourhoods, interest groups and, of course, communities' (see section 2.5). This section considers whether the co-researchers experience community as a site of citizenship; and the differences between their experiences, and the government's construct of community. Two aspects are

highlighted: firstly their strongly expressed desire to belong to a community; secondly how community is actually experienced.

In Nicaragua the Sandinista Front government's discourse constructs community as the site of citizen action where conservative Christian values are blended with socialism, a space of 'family values and unity … coexistence .. and community spirit' (Government of Nicaragua, 2014). In England, community is the site of citizens' social action, where they are empowered to act to improve their neighbourhoods (Cabinet Office and Her Majesty's Treasury, 2013). In both constructs, the citizen is an active protagonist in this imagined community space. In both sites, the co-researchers relate a sense of belonging, or a desire for community. Alfie begins his story with a memory of his childhood which is strongly rooted in a sense of belonging to place:

> *'When I was seven years of age, with my friend Malcolm on a Sunday morning, we would chase around the neighbours' houses, asking if they would like to come to Severn Beach on a coach outing. We always got enough people to come, and the trips were made possible by a community-minded man, who had his own charabanc'* (Alfie, digital story, Bristol).

Carolina, like many of the Nicaraguan storytellers, feels a strong link with her neighbourhood:

> *I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood, I think of myself as a daughter of the neighbourhood, since I arrived [when I was 13 years old] I've been working here … with young people, with the elderly … I'm looking after everyone and I get on with everyone' (Carolina, interview, Matagalpa).*

The community is thus experienced as a place of physical belonging and also a space in which citizens identify themselves as having an active role and contribution, as expressed by Carolina and others: '*I work in the local community'* (Rosa), '*community work'* (Alfie) and '*giving back'* (Samira).

However, for some participants in both sites, there is a failure to acknowledge the spatial, location-related challenges for citizens to be 'active', and that reduce their sense of belonging. Spatial and economic dynamics interact to shape their experience of citizenship. Alfie's description of what high-rise living is like for him contrasts strongly with his memory of running in and out of neighbours' houses when he was a child:

> '*You might think living in the flats is neighbourly and you see one another because you're in close proximity but not at all. People that live in a row of houses see each other every day but it's very sad the people that live in the flats in [….] might only see each other once every few months, there's so many people living in the block'* (Alfie, interview, Bristol).

Figure 6: High-rise social housing, digital story, Bristol

The co-researchers' accounts of the community as a space of citizenship, relate to both physical belonging (or isolation), and to values such as tolerance and equality. Factors such as the design of housing are cited, as in the example above, but also the attitudes of others who live around them, and who can discriminate against some groups. Navigating these relationships is necessary for people who are at risk of prejudice or condemnation from the local community. Bartolo for instance talks about his local community as an important source of support, including when he 'came out of the closet', but that this support has come in return for the investment he has made over the years as a youth leader in the community:

> '*I appreciate my neighbourhood, and my neighbourhood appreciates me … before coming out of the closet … I had to have invested a lot of time, resources, and empathy so that my neighbourhood loves me, on my block I mean, everyone loves me, greets me'.* (Bartolo, interview, Matagalpa).

However, he goes on to acknowledge that he doesn't feel belonging – the investment was so that he wouldn't be harassed for his sexuality. For Maria, the neighbourhood held her back from trying to escape domestic violence, because of what the neighbours would say if she left her husband. Colin challenges local attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers in his digital story. He thinks that people discriminate against them in his neighbourhood:

> '*Where I live is an area where refugees come to live. I am annoyed when people tell me that they are inferior for some reason. After all, we were all born 'equal' in the eyes of the Church* (Colin, Digital Story, Bristol).

In both settings therefore, some of the co-researchers experience the potential for belonging in the community as mediated by discriminatory attitudes and practices of fellow citizens, but which are reinforced by government discourses and policies – either actively (e.g. spatial planning), or through negligence. For instance, while women and young people are represented in the Family Cabinet committees in Matagalpa, policy discourses and programmes fail to address the gender-based violence which undermines their participation in these structures. The findings suggest furthermore that spatial dynamics interact with identity-based dynamics, which together impact differentially on people's sense of themselves as citizens. Government discourses of community tend not to acknowledge these differences. This research finds that in order to understand how experiences of citizenship are differentiated by identities such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality, spatial analyses need to be combined with a deeper understanding of subjective and relational dynamics. With relation to governance, this finding resonates with Kallio, Häkli and Bäcklund's (2015) argument for combining territorial analyses with approaches that explore relational modes of agency; and with Turner's (2016) call for research into citizenship that combines the study of governmental mechanisms with a disaggregated exploration of subjective experiences. The next section fills this gap, by exploring how citizens' different subjectivities mediate their experience of citizenship.

5.3 Citizenship and marginalised identities

This chapter has established that participants experience their citizenship is shaped by their experience of political and social rights, but also through their experiences of spatial belonging or marginalisation. The literature review in Chapter Two also suggests that belonging and citizenship are experienced according to identities such as age, gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity. This section discusses how citizenship is experienced through these identities, and its implications for feeling and acting like a citizen, or citizen subjectivity. It explores how people construct their identities as citizens, and how these different identities create multiple subjective experiences of citizenship. The data were generated through narrated, audio-visual digital storytelling processes, which draws on different ways of knowing (see 3.1.1) and therefore communicates what citizens see and feel, as well as what they know conceptually or cognitively. These physical and emotional as well as conceptual ways of knowing

provide insight into their particular subjective experiences, and help to build up a picture of the links between the multi-subjective self and how the person experiences and expresses this self as a citizen.

5.3.1 Citizenship as subjectivities

Chapter Two highlighted the importance of belonging for a sense of citizenship, belonging to a democratic polity (Habermas, 1989); or belonging to a group or collectivity (Isin and Wood, 1999). Citizen identity may be generated through belonging to a nation state and participating in its democratic processes. Yet, the findings discussed in this chapter reveal how the co-researchers at times have felt a lack of belonging, suggesting a mismatch between these citizenship theories and the realities of citizens living in marginalised settings. Feelings of lack of belonging and citizenship are expressed by some co-researchers in terms of powerlessness or invisibility. Rosa for instance describes her own experience as:

> '*not feeling that you're visible: the problem is that you can exist, but what if no-one sees you*?' (Rosa, DST workshop, Nicaragua).

Figure 11: woman doing domestic chores, Rosa's story

This feeling of being invisible as a citizen is also expressed by Samira (Bristol) as being 'in the dark'; by Rosa (Matagalpa) as being 'in a fantasy world'; and by Emilia (Bristol) as being 'lost'. These are powerful expressions of *not* belonging.

Emilia experiences a loss of identity and belonging which impacts on her sense of citizenship, when she has to stop work and claim benefits to support her and her baby:

'As the months went by, I lost my identity, my confidence, and kind of who I was, what I was. I was lost' (Emilia, digital story, Bristol).

These experiences of invisibility and lack of belonging, are frequently accompanied by a sense of personal responsibility, that the isolation has been produced through their own failings. Emilia expresses shame and a sense of inadequacy because she has become financially dependent on benefits:

'*… because I was on benefits, I felt like I was taking from society and not contributing*' (Emilia, digital story, Bristol).

Emilia and others describe a sense of powerlessness that results from the normalisation of their situations, through a combination of social customs, behaviours and institutional practices. Once they accept and internalise their situation as 'normal', inevitable or deserved, it is very difficult for them to see any possibility of change. In Rosa's experience, violence and loss of rights in the private and personal sphere and spaces, can become perceived as normal, and lead to a loss of citizenship:

*'I didn't feel like a citizen because my life was very complicated. I lived in a circle of violence – physical and psychological … I lived in a fantasy world, believing that everything that happened to me was normal' (*Rosa, digital story, Matagalpa).

A sense of belonging is particularly difficult to achieve when formal and informal processes reinforce each other and motivate a sense of personal responsibility for experiences of marginalisation. When policies, discourses and norms intersect they shape people's private as well as public lives. This leads to the internalisation of blame and a sense of personal inadequacy that they are in this situation. Lola feels that her own action (declaring her sexuality) led to her loss of belonging and citizenship:

'I felt like I was nobody, I had given so much and I was nobody, just because I had said that I had a different sexual option' (Lola, DST workshop, Matagalpa)

Bartolo in Matagalpa analyses his own story and compares his sense of not feeling like a citizen to lacking a safe home:

'*in my story, I said that I didn't have a homeland (patria), as if I had no home, because it's at home that your family is there for you, home is where they protect you, help you, accompany you, and I relate this to the country and feeling like a citizen, protected, safe, accompanied; this is what we don't feel – I don't feel like I have a homeland*' (Bartolo, DST workshop, *Matagalpa*).

These findings challenge the government discourses in both settings that promise an empowered and active citizenship. Rather, they suggest that the spaces and discourses which operate in their environments, undermine people's sense of citizenship. Bartolo's lack of belonging is driven by dynamics of marginalisation – poverty, spatial disadvantage, and also through the dynamics which relate to social identities. How he identifies himself and his experience of how others identify and treat him, *together* generate his subjective experience of 'self'. The findings suggest that this subjective experience also shapes how citizenship is experienced.

People's sense of belonging is contingent on their feeling connected with others, experiencing relationships in which they are recognised, 'seen'. As a result, when discourses reconstitute issues as personal inadequacies, this facilitates the internalisation of responsibility and blame, which separates and isolates the individual. This serves to render *invisible* marginalised identities and groups, whereby citizens are experiencing and in some cases, internalising, a policy discourse or discriminatory practice which has produced in them a sense of disempowerment. As they turn it on themselves, they become divided from themselves and from others (Foucault, 1983) and become invisible, and at the same time held responsible for the situation (Rose and Miller, 1992). At this point in their stories, they do not critically analyse their situations. Instead, they express their sense of citizenship in terms of feeling invisible, powerless, isolated, ashamed or rejected.

The stories provide insights into marginalised citizenship experienced from the perspective of different identities. Gender and age are identities which particularly shape experiences in both the Bristol and the Nicaraguan group; while sexuality emerges as a marginalised identity for two people in the Matagalpa group. The stories reveal how the co-researchers' experiences of citizenship are mediated by dynamics which normalise gender-based violence (Rosa, Maria, Ximena), silence women (Rosa, Maria, Emilia), humiliate and marginalise people who do not identify as heterosexual (Bartolo, Lola), isolate or punish people who are experiencing poverty (Emilia, Colin, Jack, Ximena) or struggling with mental health issues (Alfie). Identity-based discrimination interacts with economic marginalisation, leading to strong experiences of exclusion which the co-researchers describe in terms of a loss of a sense of citizen rights and identity.

Social identities, marginalisation and citizenship

When an identity is marginalised through discrimination, this experience intersects with other aspects of marginalisation (e.g. economic, spatial), intensifying feelings of exclusion. Gender identities are significant, since all of the female co-researchers describe in their stories a point at which they felt overwhelmed by the systems and structures around them, and by their own fears. They talk about the formal processes which have oppressed them: policies and procedures towards benefits claimants in

England; institutional practices with relation to women and sexuality in Nicaragua. They also communicate how the informal dynamics; social and institutional attitudes and discourses towards them as immigrants, single parents, or women experiencing domestic violence; conspire with the formal processes, to affect how they feel about themselves, and undermine their capacity to act. These experiences are thus multi-subjective, taking place in the intersection of gender and/or sexuality and/or youth/older age and poverty.

Maria identifies her powerlessness to act in order to escape an abusive relationship, and connects this impotence with a loss of citizenship:

> '*I didn't feel like I was a full citizen because I was living in silence, darkness, fear, and shame, my commitment to my partner obliged me to be at home'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa).

These examples demonstrate how gender norms which legitimise violence against women, at the same time undermine their sense of themselves as citizens. Understanding the power of these norms is important for policy because the assumption made in much policy relating to 'active citizenship' is that, given the necessary tools and information, citizens will step up to take on public-oriented tasks such as joining neighbourhood committees, volunteering to run local services, monitoring local government projects, and so on (see for example Fox, 2014 on 'strategic' approaches to linking citizen voice with governance mechanisms for 'social accountability', but which do not address social barriers such as discrimination). Yet, as the data presented so far in this chapter demonstrates, there are significant factors which undermine the potential of marginalised groups to take up opportunities for active citizenship.

Experiences of citizen empowerment through employment (i.e. the neoliberal citizenship discourse), are also gendered. While Jack (Bristol) describes his working life as a source of entitlement, for Ximena (Matagalpa), the workplace has not been an arena in which self-esteem and collegiality are developed. As discussed earlier, gender norms undermine her experience in the workplace, which she describes as a place '*where power and bad practice take advantage of innocence and people's poverty'* (Ximena, digital story, Matagalpa) in the form of sexual harassment. For Emilia in Bristol, while work brought independence and self-esteem, dependence on benefits brought feelings of worthlessness, and as she discovers, also vulnerability, since the benefits can suddenly be stopped. For Rosa as a single mother in Matagalpa, the combination of poverty and domestic abuse drives her to look for employment in Costa Rica, running further risks and losing the legal protection of being a citizen within her own country.

For Emilia and Rosa, their identities as young women and mothers intersect with poverty to deepen their sense of isolation and powerlessness. This social isolation is compounded for Rosa and Maria by the domestic violence they experience, and the fear and shame that this brings:

> *'I was submissive, dedicated to the family. I didn't have the right to anything, or to decide anything'* (Rosa, digital story, Matagalpa).

> *'I was afraid of what people would say so I didn't go out, I didn't mix with people, I didn't get any information except when I went to the health centre, nowhere else'* (Maria, digital story, Matagalpa).

Bartolo's experience highlights how gender, age and sexuality intersect with poverty to provoke particular dilemmas and choices. To study for his preferred career in Matagalpa meant paying to go to the expensive private university:

> '*I worked to pay for my studies. My time was so limited that I couldn't get a formal part-time job because of my activist activities [LGBT rights]; I looked for an opportunity for more informal work … sex work became my best option'* (Bartolo, digital story, Matagalpa).

These accounts demonstrate how informal and hidden processes of differentiation towards social identities impact in concrete ways on people's lives, and are at the same time reinforced in the public sphere. This happens when public policy fails to acknowledge the social differentiation that undermines the capacities of some groups to exercise or demand their rights. Experiences of gender and sexuality-based discrimination are not expressed explicitly in the English stories. There are a number of reasons for this. None of the English participants identified as gay, and the two women in the group did not explicitly analyse their own situations in terms of gender.

Figure 12: River of Life. Maria, Matagalpa

Given that it was a mixed group it was less conducive to sharing experiences of GBV, whereas the first workshop in Nicaragua was attended only by women, and GBV emerged as a key factor when participants presented their Rivers of Life, as in the photo (Figure 6), which is a section of Maria's River of Life depicting the violent male figure towering in a threatening way over the rest of the family.

Furthermore, some of the Nicaraguan participants had attended workshops on GBV which had

equipped them to articulate their experiences. It is also possible that GBV in the English setting is not endemic as it is in Nicaragua, where most of the participants felt strongly that their citizenship was compromised by gender-based violence and discrimination. Bartolo in Nicaragua had a sophisticated level of analysis of gender power relations, due to the combination of his own experience, his activism, and his university studies. He explained to the group how he understands gender as a form of invisible power:

> *It's a structure, and in this structure, is the behaviour, and behaviour comes from norms; norms aren't written down in laws, and when I say they aren't written down, there's no rule that says that Ximena can't go to the University [because she's a woman] but this is in many men and women's minds, and that's what power is. Power differentiates between people in a group, it gives them different values'* (Bartolo, power workshop, Matagalpa).

Lola's story challenges the Sandinista Front's discourse of the 1980s, and how it has been adopted since the party's re-election. Her analysis supports Heumann's (2014) view that in the 1980s the Sandinista Front mobilized an anti-feminist discourse, and marginalized sexual and reproductive rights from the revolutionary struggle, producing complex processes of (self)disciplining and (self)silencing. However, through the process of making these invisible processes (i.e. discourse and discriminatory practices and norms) visible, it becomes possible to see how they operate, and to confront them (Love, 1997; Howard and Vajda, 2016). This contestation is the subject of the next chapter.

It is important to highlight sexuality and/or gender-based discrimination and violence as particular issues in Nicaragua, since their impact is expressed in *every* story and interview; yet homophobia and gender-based violence are not systematically addressed by the government, which has eliminated funding to support Women's Police Stations, and has effectively decriminalised violence against women by requiring GBV complaints to be addressed through mediation, via the Family Cabinet and the local priest (see 4.3.2). These policies reinforce discriminatory attitudes across the public and private spheres, and contribute to feelings of self-blame and isolation amongst those who experience GBV.

While acute and endemic domestic violence is not evident in the English stories, the English storytellers express feelings of fear, shame or isolation similar to those expressed by the Nicaraguan storytellers. A sense of isolation is expressed in the stories of citizenship in both sites, suggesting that their marginalisation results in feelings of 'not belonging' (Turner, 2016), which these findings demonstrate is fundamental to subjective citizenship. Stories of isolation in the English context come about through depression and mental health issues, old age, and immigration status, exacerbated by

spatial and economic disadvantage. Colin's story highlights how the intersection of older age, economic or spatial isolation can drive a sense of not belonging:

> *'At first, I thought I was isolated because I live on my own. After I retired, I did not do much'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).

Jack's story communicates how his working life is a source of self-respect and companionship. However, on retirement he too begins to feel the fear of isolation, of not belonging.

> *'On retiring, I thought isolation and lonely living would not suit after the activities of work and the fellowship that goes with it' (*Jack, Digital Story, Bristol).

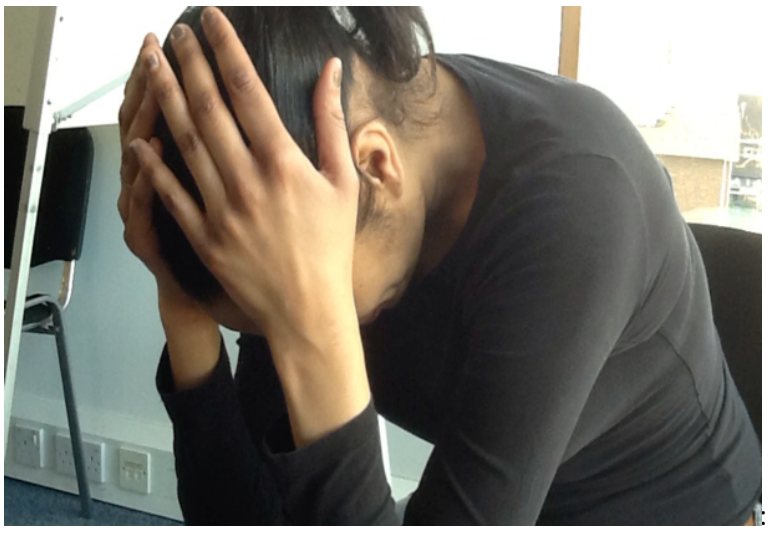
Alfie's story describes his long struggle with depression and alcoholism:

> '*I had a tragic setback occur ... my eldest son died in the Bristol Royal Infirmary of acute alcohol and drug abuse. To combat this, I went to AA meetings twice a day for a month. Community work ceased for three months. I needed time to myself'* (Alfie, digital story, Bristol).

The marginalisation which can be triggered by older age, depression and mental health issues, is compounded when there is also spatial and economic marginalisation. In fact, they feed into and mutually reinforce each other. Emilia talks about the stress and anxiety she felt when her benefits are suddenly suspended, and after nine weeks of trying to sort out the problem, she became ill and distressed:

> *I don't know how I'll get by*. *The emotional and mental strain, that's getting on my nerves. It's something I can't control … there's no off button is there, it's doing my head in'* (Emilia, interview, Bristol).

Figure 13: Emilia, digital story, Bristol



Common across both settings are feelings of isolation because of poverty and shame, exacerbated by societal norms and expectations as well as policy discourses around welfare, work, sexuality, gender and violence. These experiences of isolation deeply impact on people's sense of themselves as citizens. While my focus in this study is on marginalised communities it is likely that these concerns – domestic violence, oppression of women, depression, substance misuse are also evident in other (e.g. affluent) communities. It would be interesting in future research to inquire whether citizens with these subjectivities in wealthy communities also feel marginalised, and the implications for their sense of citizenship. However, this study evidences that economic and spatial marginalisation reinforce identity-based forms of marginalisation, and inform experiences of citizenship, to the extent that people feel their agency as citizens is compromised.

This section has demonstrated that people experience their citizenship through a combination of identities, and that these identities are subject to social hierarchies which are often reinforced (or unchallenged) in government policies and discourses, and resulting in experiences which some co-researchers articulate in terms of non-citizenship. Following Heumann (2014, p.307), these findings highlight the need to interrogate prevailing citizenship discourses, and to ask if they are mobilised to persuade us that the exclusion of some identity-based issues (e.g. gender and sexuality) is an 'acceptable (if not correct) prioritization of social justice issues that claim to be good for "everybody."'

The links between 'feeling' and 'being' a citizen are surfaced in these stories. A theme in the citizenship literature that was highlighted in Chapter Two is the emotional and affective dimension of citizenship – both in terms of how citizenship is experienced, and in terms of how governments can shape ideas and practices of citizenship through emotions – the affective dimension of governmentality. This is explored further in the next section.

5.3.2 Emotional dimensions of citizenship

Yuval-Davis (2011) has argued for the recognition of the emotional as well as social and political dimensions of belonging, which this Chapter (5.2) has demonstrated is linked to citizenship. Others are drawing attention to 'affective' citizenship with reference to the ways in which governmentality operates through the emotions, when government shapes people's behaviours through appealing to their feelings (Mookherjee, 2005; Gregorio and Merolli, 2016; de Wilde & Duyvendak, 2016). Even so, in citizenship research, the emotional is less studied, and is explored here as a way of connecting the personal and the public dimensions of citizenship.

In the digital stories of citizenship, the participants' feelings are vividly expressed: *'It was like living in darkness and silence (Maria); 'I felt like I was going underground, into the dark' (Samira).* Emotions, particularly of fear and pain, are communicated through the images and words of the digital stories. The story-tellers do not separate 'being a citizen' from these experiences, and through the multiple media of the digital storytelling process, they demonstrate how marginalisation shapes their citizenship in physical and emotional ways, as well as their cognitive interpretations of citizenship (see discussion of extended epistemologies in 3.1.1). In the English setting, a number of the co-researchers expressed moments of loss of citizenship in terms of strong emotional responses to personal tragedy/breakdown. One storyteller shares the vulnerability of addiction:

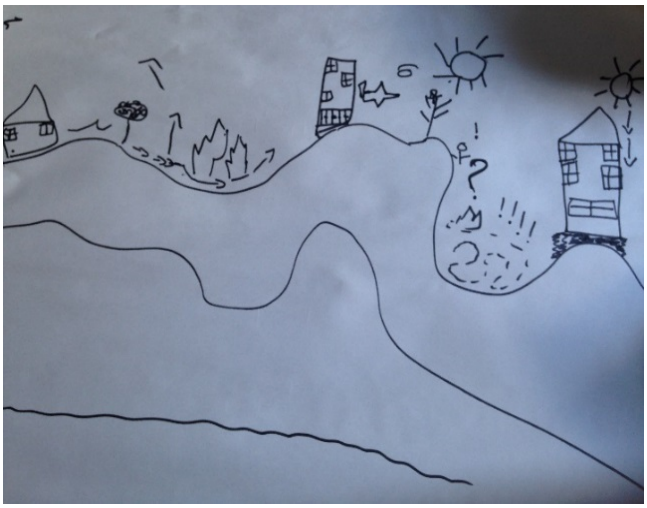
> '*My marriage started to go downhill. I had lost my sister and my father, and when my mother died, this left a great void in my life. My wife and I decided to part company, and I found it difficult to live alone with my memories, and I found solace in alcohol*' (Alfie, digital story, Bristol).

Samira describes the extreme violence of civil war:

> *'when the war happened, our house was destroyed. Soldiers they attacked us, they destroyed our family. When they left, they thought I was dead. I got injured and lost my finger, loads of injury all over my body'* (Samira, interview, Bristol).

In her 'river of life' drawing, she drew the war as flames from which she had to escape (see Figure 8, below).

Figure 14: Samira, River of Life, Bristol



These experiences are conveyed through vivid images and expressions of psychological and emotional impact.

Fear, pain, shame and isolation are sometimes powerfully evoked by the co-researchers through using their own bodies to construct images for their digital story (see Emilia's story, and Figure 7).

Maria vividly expresses her experience of living in a violent marriage:

> '*It was like living in darkness and silence, without the right to speak or to have opinions'.*

Figure 15: Maria, digital story, Matagalpa

She creates an image using her own body, to convey this moment, which clearly communicates her feelings of fear, shame and imprisonment (Figure 9).

The storytellers make a connection between these expressions of loss and isolation within the family, community or nation state, with their citizenship. In doing so, they demonstrate that citizenship is engaged with emotionally and physically, as well as conceptually. The stories make the link between the personal and public dimensions of citizenship. All mention something profoundly emotional about their personal relationships and their relationships with institutions, which has affected their capacity to be active citizens. Power relations in the intimate and private realms impact on people's experiences of citizenship in the public realm; mental health issues triggered by depression or violence can become barriers to people's full participation in work life and community life. Women and men alike experience vulnerabilities and exclusion, but it is in the intersection of a number of inequalities (spatial, economic) and devalued identities (age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability) that people experience acute feelings of stress, shame, anxiety and powerlessness.

These findings resonate with the literature on citizenship identity that recognises the importance of 'affect' and the emotions in how people experience their citizenship, in addition to the rational ideas of Habermasian liberal democratic deliberation (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Mookherjee, 2005). The director of a women's organisation in Matagalpa which works especially with women experiencing GBV, emphasises the connection between the intellectual and the physical:

> '*everything passes through our bodies, our health … if you don't have a space to recuperate in, to heal yourself and build up your strength, that's really important to us. This kind of work is personal development and reconstruction, because the person isn't well and ready to face the world, they're carrying around a load of pain, grief and problems*' (director, local civil society organisation, LCS3-M).

This is powerfully reflected in Emilia's experience in Bristol of trying to get her benefits reinstated. Her response is both emotional and political:

> *'She must be aware of it [the local MP]. It's not just me that's been affected. I've heard a case of someone who's committed suicide over this. Being accused that you're not a single parent. It's hard enough as it is. It's hard enough being a mum, but being a single parent with only that amount of income coming in, don't get me wrong I'm not complaining, I know that in some parts of the country you don't get anything like that, I'm not complaining about that, but you have to ring up all the time, prove this, prove that, mentally and emotionally … I suffer from … I'm quite a sensitive person … We've all got that mental health part of our brain, for stress and anxiety, but some people just get it worse than others. […] How easy it is to go back into that space …* (Emilia, interview, Bristol)

This suggests that there is significant emotional effort required to access citizenship in circumstances when citizen rights are experienced as undermined, or even non-existent, in these circumstances. Ximena and Emilia both speak of how they feel emotionally exhausted by their situations:

> *'I ask for respect. But having to keep asking can wear a human being out*' (Ximena, digital story, Matagalpa).

> *'There's only so much you can take, there's only so much my brain can take, and I can still disguise it*' (Emilia, interview, Bristol).

Isin (2004) relates anxiety to citizenship, and how 'neuroliberalism' is a form of neoliberal governmentality that shapes our citizenship through our emotions (see section 2.5.2). This research suggests that the discourses and spaces of governmentality may both use existing fears and anxieties to extend control and shape citizens, and at the same time create new anxieties and ways of internalising blame. On one hand, discursive constructions of neoliberal citizenship promote a particular type of active, entrepreneurial, protagonist citizen, without acknowledging that survival may require strategies, as Pettit has argued (2016), such as staying below the radar, or coping with emotional exhaustion. On the other, discourses and discriminatory practices and spaces have emotional impact, and drive the internalisation of discrimination and shame, which in turn impacts on

people's interactions in the community and with institutions. These emotional impacts, and the emotional effort required to overcome them, therefore cannot be ignored when considering attempts to practise or access citizenship.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings about people's lived experience of citizenship – their attempts to access and sustain citizenship in marginalised neighbourhoods of Matagalpa and Bristol. It has found that people think of citizenship in terms of rights, but often do not experience these rights in their everyday lives. Political rights are highly valued, especially in the Nicaraguan context where the lack of these rights under the repressive Somoza regime is still part of people's consciousness, but felt to be undermined by economic marginalisation. Social and economic rights in both contexts are felt to cluster around access to work or social assistance programmes, and citizenship is felt to be diminished by worklessness, especially in England where reliance on welfare was not described as accessing a right, but in terms of disempowerment or shame.

The dynamics which Foucault (1983) has described as governmentality, operate through disciplinary technologies, through discourses and spaces. The findings in both settings evidence how these technologies neutralise resistance as citizens come to feel divided from others and internalise responsibility for their own situations, finding themselves inadequate (see 2.5.1). A Nicaraguan co-researcher alerted the group to the risk of the story-telling process playing into this dynamic, if in telling their stories they cast themselves as victims:

> *'So, when we make these stories, we need to take care that they aren't victimising stories, that they aren't sad, because sadness can trap us in a vicious circle. We're talking about citizens really, with stories about being citizens'* (Bartolo, DST workshop, Matagalpa).

These processes of discipline and exclusion are experienced differently according to identities such as gender, sexuality, older age, and mental health status, as well as economic and spatial circumstances. This means that citizenship rights are most compromised when people are experiencing multiple forms of marginalisation. Technologies of governmentality therefore need to be understood to comprise gender, sexuality, and other identity-based categories through which the subject is disciplined, and divided from others.

This analysis has implications for citizenship agency, given that Turner argues that citizen subjectivity is generated through the struggle against marginality, when people call for their rights and identities

to be acknowledged and respected. Yet, it is in these circumstances that it is more difficult to demand rights, and citizen agency can be eroded. Citizen agency is diminished through a loss of trust in democratic process due to party patronage and corruption in Nicaragua, but also when services or welfare benefits cannot be accessed in England; and, in both settings, when discrimination is experienced.

The stories also show how, in both sites people are striving for belonging: acceptance, recognition, inclusion, and respect. They reveal how marginalisation is experienced physically and emotionally, and that these affective dimensions have implications for how citizens construct themselves as political subjects. These findings are important because the political rationality of the state frames and orients citizenship within a logic and a state project (as described in Chapter 4), and furthermore orients research to investigate citizenship from the perspective of this logic: promoting or assessing citizenship through approaches which are framed by policy discourse and decontextualized from the realities of people's everyday lives, and especially the challenges and inequalities faced by people living in marginalised settings.

Socio-economic, identity-based and spatial experiences of marginalisation have been shown in this chapter to erode people's sense of being a citizen, and of being able to *act* as a citizen. These findings also highlight that being a citizen requires recognition of one's own value, which can be extended to valuing others whose identities have been marginalised, through acts of solidarity which recognise others and make them visible, building relational capacities for citizenship. The next chapter discusses these aspects of building citizenship, and relates them to the question of citizen agency. It focuses on the dynamics in the co-researchers' lives which are generative of political subjectivities, despite the challenges of the different kinds of marginalisation that have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Six Citizenship, agency and resistance

This chapter considers citizenship from the perspective of agency. As discussed in Chapter Two, Foucault (1990) finds that governmentality and agency are interlinked, but other scholars have argued for the need to pay more attention to agency (Bevir, 2018) and resistance (Turner, 2016) in citizenship research. Isin and Nielsen (2008) have described citizen agency as the capacity to act and claim rights, but the findings in Chapter Five suggest that experiences of marginalisation can undermine this capacity. This chapter focuses on the ways in which the co-researchers experience themselves as having agency as citizens, despite their experiences of economic, spatial or identity-based marginalisation. It explores whether they contest marginalising discourses, and in what circumstances they generate alternative discourses and spaces to access and practise their citizenship, in England and Nicaragua.

Like Chapter Five, this chapter is informed by the participatory research process, and draws on the combination of rivers of life, in-depth interviews and data from the digital storytelling process, to explore experiences of citizenship and contestation in marginalised settings. The form and process of creating and sharing their stories enabled each co-researcher to narrate their own story, bear witness to their own and each other's journeys and experiences, and recognise their own agency in these accounts.

Section 6.1 explores the links between agency and political subjectivity, and how agency is experienced in England and Nicaragua. Section 6.2 discusses what generates agency when it has been eroded: i) the need to revalue identities which have been devalued to regain a sense of self-worth; ii) the importance of the recognition of others in order to foster a sense of citizen identity; and iii) how 'disruptions' of marginalising discourses can act as triggers for critical citizenship and the generation of political subjectivities. Section 6.3 explores the forms of citizen agency as resistance that the co-researchers practise, and the often small, everyday acts through which this resistance is expressed.

6.1 Citizenship agency and political subjectivity

'When and how do I feel like a citizen?', is the question that triggered the digital story process. Citizen agency is not automatically accessed, but is linked to subjective experiences of being able to act as a citizen – political subjectivity. Not all of the co-researchers described feeling like a citizen, or being able to act as a citizen. Furthermore, in the stories there are moments in which they described feeling

like a citizen, and other moments when they felt that their citizenship was denied. Citizen agency is thus experienced in differentiated ways, both between people, and within the trajectory of a person's life. The factors that contribute are discussed here.

Some of the co-researchers were able to mobilise positive identities, which offered them a narrative for a positive citizenship story. Two who strongly articulate a sense of their agency as citizens, are Jack in Bristol, and Lola in Matagalpa. Jack has a sense of his own citizenship which resides in his belief that he has proved his worth through his working life. For Jack, his working life has brought him the right to have opinions, and to call to account those in power:

> *'I feel justified in praising the good works of a few and criticizing the bad works of many. I speak with the people concerned when possible, and with others who share an interest. I write to those I criticise'* (Jack, digital story, Bristol).

As discussed in Chapter Four, the English citizen is the neoliberal working or work-ready citizen, a notion which is also gendered, since it does not take into account the pressures to juggle work with care duties or community work (White and Williams, 2016; Eyben, 2012). Jack's sense of entitlement through work fits with the construct of the kind of citizen which is valued in the English neoliberal citizenship discourse. He is able to convert this entitlement into political subjectivity, meaning that his narrative about himself is a citizen who can act politically – which for him, involves speaking or writing to politicians or service providers.

Lola also describes a strong sense of agency as a Party activist in the context of Nicaragua in the 1980s:

> *'My sense of what it meant to be Nicaraguan grew as I got fully involved in the tasks of the revolution… I helped organize farmworkers into unions, to organize agricultural cooperatives with small and medium-sized producers, and to direct the National Literacy Campaign in Managua … I did community organizing in the neighbourhoods of Managua, organizing around community priorities, and then I joined the armed forces and spent some time there'* (Lola, digital story, Matagalpa).

She goes on to say, '*I felt like a citizen when I saw the fruits of all our labours'*. She gains a sense of identity and value through her work as a Party member and connects this to citizenship which she articulates as collective – 'our labours'. Lola's identity as a party activist fits with the discursive construct of the socialist citizen of that time, contributing to the national project which brought with it a sense of belonging and pride. Like Jack, she has a sense of entitlement because of her activities – she contributes to 'the tasks of the revolution' and is therefore entitled to practise political citizenship.

In both contexts, there is a connection between work, identity, and agency for political citizenship. Both Jack and Lola reflect on periods of their working lives as bringing them the right to participate in democratic processes beyond the ballot box. Their work also gave them a feeling of belonging to a wider collective: to the firm; to a group of colleagues through '*the activities of work and the fellowship that goes with it',* as Jack puts it in his story; to the revolution and the collective endeavour. Moreover, these 'worker' identities were explicitly recognised and valued in the government discourses in both contexts.

These examples of political subjectivity have emerged in circumstances in which the person's activities are in tune with the prevailing discourse of citizenship. Yet, even for Jack and Lola, once their actions go against this discourse, they find themselves disempowered. Jack talks of 'isolation' after retirement from employment; Lola is literally deprived of her political rights after she discloses her sexuality.

For most of the co-researchers, their experience of citizenship is shaped through formal and informal processes (policies, discourses, practices and norms), which at times devalue their identities. In England, because they were unemployed or retired, lacked legal status, living in poverty, or with mental health issues. In Nicaragua, poverty is a significant factor, but also discrimination or abuse relating to their identities and realities as female, gay, or single parent. Despite the different contexts and drivers of marginalisation, Emilia's experience of being a single parent on benefits in Bristol, and Ximena's experience of trying to challenge sexism in the workplace in Matagalpa, produced in both of them feelings of disempowerment, frustration and despair. In these examples, their agency as citizens is eroded when their identities are marginalised, meaning that *political* subjectivity is undermined when other subjectivities are devalued.

The analysis in the following sections considers how citizen agency can be generated when it has been eroded; the triggers that enable citizens to contest marginalising discourses and spaces; and the circumstances in which political subjectivity and agency are fostered.

6.2 What generates agency when it has been eroded?

Agency is eroded in spaces in which marginalising policies operate (such as welfare organisations, citizen engagement arenas), and also by the informal discourses and narratives, which shape the relationships between people in these spaces; between governmental actors and citizens, and also between people with different identities. Some people will find themselves gaining a sense of entitlement through these discourses; for example if the discourse favours people who are in work,

or members of the ruling party. Others may feel that they are not acknowledged, or that aspects of their identities are stigmatised, which can create a 'crisis of life worlds' resulting from a mismatch between their sense of themselves and how the system sees them (Kemmis, 2008; see section 1.1). The findings discussed here indicate that there are several factors which contribute to the generation of citizen subjectivity and agency (rather than powerlessness and frustration, as experienced by Emilia and Ximena in the examples above). Firstly, at the personal level, rebuilding a sense of self-worth, or self-recognition. Secondly, at the relational level, gaining respect and recognition from others, which contributes to a sense of belonging to a wider collective or community. Thirdly, developing a sense of the possibility of change, that through one's actions it may be possible to live more justly, and to realise one's rights. These are not elements of a linear process, and setbacks or reversals are also possible. Each factor is considered below.

> ***Bartolo:*** *I felt power 'over' at University, which I think is a like a system that we enter involuntarily, and where we have to answer to the teachers and learn a profession in order to become part of society. I also see that the university gives us power, but there is also the abuse of power by authorities, there's patriarchy, and many injustices. But Xiomara had plenty of 'power within', she always had a positive attitude with relation to that kind of power, the dirty kind, the stupid blackmailing that she experienced. That's a bad kind of power that she was talking about. You were brave to say no, you have to be brave to respond to this kind of power. You did it on your own, you didn't have people around you to help you, I didn't see any 'power with' or people accompanying you, to help you take this decision.*
>
> ***Rosa:*** *In some of the stories, we don't have power, we depend on an authority, on another person. I see that in my story, that I depended on another person, as if he was a god. When we are children, we have to obey, when we become adolescents and we get married very early, we depend on a husband, on an authority right, so I've noticed that we say 'enough!' that's where I see 'power to', so I think this happens in stages, that's what I've seen in the stories. That we develop or learn to use our power over time, according to the stage that we're living in, and the dreams that we have.*
>
> ***Xiomena:*** *It's about what we dream of, where we aspire to get to, that's what shapes the situations.*
>
> ***Maria:*** *But sometimes, our dreams and our goals can't be achieved because of some circumstance that gets in the way, and maybe you have the courage to do something that you've said you wanted to do, but then it goes wrong … but I think that when we challenge*

ourselves to do something, there's a time and a way to achieve it, and to make progress, we have to learn about ourselves, appreciate ourselves, value ourselves.

Box 4: Group analysis of the digital stories, Matagalpa

6.2.1 Rebuilding personal capacity for citizenship

It was discussed previously (see sections 4.4 and 5.2), how citizen agency is undermined when the citizen feels powerless, and this is further entrenched when s/he is unable to match up to the 'good' citizen portrayed in policy discourses. This failure can be internalised and lead to a sense of personal guilt and failure, or responsibility. The findings suggest that when people's identities are devalued, practising citizen agency requires first re-building a sense of one's intrinsic value (we found Veneklasen and Miller's (2002) term 'power within' useful in the workshop discussions). The links between self-worth, a sense of rights, and citizenship, are clearly articulated by Bartolo who insists that to be a citizen requires starting from a basis of self-respect:

> *'Why are we talking about whether I feel like a citizen or not, in a social world, in a state, in a country? First, we need to go back to our personal experiences, and ask if we really respect ourselves, love ourselves – I'm talking about the personal level, let's respect ourselves'* (Bartolo, DST workshop, Matagalpa)

For some of the co-researchers, it has been impossible to gain self-respect without reaching a crisis point. Both Rosa and Maria had to leave an abusive marriage before they could feel themselves to be citizens. Since for them, citizenship is based in rights and values, they needed to be able to exercise those rights in their everyday lives, and to be able to live by their values before they could call themselves citizens. In order to take this step, they had to challenge their own ideas about what is normal and acceptable. The turning point for Rosa is the realisation that she has rights but she was living in a situation which denied her these rights:

> '*The moment I felt like a citizen was when I separated from my husband. I realized that I'd been wrong, and that I have value, I have many rights and capacities'* (Rosa, digital story, Matagalpa).

This realisation, is the product of what Siisiäinen (2014, p.18) has called 'cognitive dissonance', when a person becomes aware of a fundamental contradiction between their values or beliefs, and the norms within which they are living. The stories demonstrate how dissonance can be ignored and suppressed for a long time because of the internalisation of the rules and behaviours of the status quo. Maria's story illustrates this experience. She had lived with domestic violence for a long time before she began to be aware of the contradiction between her community work and her domestic

situation: '*I began to go to talks about rights and violence that people experience and don't speak out about, about self-esteem, and mine was so low'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa).

Maria for a while lived a '*double life'*, when she was attending meetings of the Matagalpa Community Movement, or giving talks on family planning, but at home continued to endure domestic violence. A turning point for her was when she became aware of the contradiction between her personal life and her activist life:

> '*The moment came when I was giving talks in the community movement – I was a health promoter – and I said to myself, "I live with violence and I'm giving talks against violence". I felt bad because I remember one time I was giving a talk on adolescence and I remember my ex was sitting back there and when we finished, and the young people had left, he said to me "that's what you teach to whores and prostitutes"'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa).

This point is when Maria acknowledges that the self-esteem and self-respect she encourages in others, are absent in her own life. She turns from this awareness to review her own right to self-respect and life without violence. In England, Emilia too had experienced shame and depression, and in her story she tells of how this changed once she started to attend sessions at the local community organisation. She highlights the importance of being heard and accepted:

> *'At this moment, my life changed dramatically for the better. I felt accepted and welcome. I no longer felt isolated, and I had somewhere to go where I could openly talk about how I felt without being judged*' (Emilia, digital story, Bristol).

These processes of change are deeply personal, and involve overcoming isolation, low self-esteem and rebuilding self-respect. The extent to which these processes generate personal capacities for citizenship, varies across individual stories. In the workshops, we discussed 'power' as a synonym for citizen agency, and the co-researchers made connections between self-esteem (power within); being with and interacting with others (power with); and their agency to act in the world (power to). The discussions in the workshops and in-depth interviews, created a space and time for people to reflect on the processes that they had come through, which for many of the co-researchers had been traumatic. Acknowledging this, and recognising that they had survived, made them powerfully aware of their own agency now, in contrast to the feelings of powerlessness they had expressed in their stories:

> *'[Power] is when you can express yourself, when you're free'* (Maria, DST workshop, Matagalpa).

'Yes [I have power], but in a good way. Because I've got like a gift that God gave to me inside me, I've got love inside me that's giving me courage to speak to the people, to say hello, and to know how I can help if they need help. I'm feeling that I'm very powerful inside'. (Samira, interview, Bristol).

'Now, when they want to put me down, I ignore them … you have to say 'enough!' that's the way I think now, I think in a positive way, and say 'no more!' (Rosa, interview, Matagalpa).

Another contributing factor is that co-researchers in both sites refer to informal learning opportunities which have helped them to build their self-confidence and to gain awareness of their own knowledge and value (self-recognition). In Bristol, Samira takes all the courses at the local school and at the local community organisation that she can; Emilia has taken courses at the community organisation and now volunteers on one of them; and Emilia and Colin have applied to participate in an active citizenship course (funded by the British Council and delivered by another local community-based organisation). In Nicaragua, Rosa and Maria have attended workshops on gender-based violence. Rosa, Carolina and Maria have attended a range of workshops and courses on community organising and community development. Sara recalls how transformative it was for her to attend workshops facilitated by a community organisation in Matagalpa:

'We can find our identities, stop crying about what has happened and move on, stop crying about the current situation since we can't change it overnight, and begin to take small steps. I always remember what they told me in those workshops: "[Sara], change comes from within". So, we started to shrug off the "I can't because of the kids"; "I can't because I didn't study", and when we leave all that behind we can say "I can do it" and not just what I can do for myself, what can I do for those around me' (Sara, interview, Matagalpa).

Often, as Sara indicates, opportunities to build personal capacities and confidence lead to activities for the benefit of others, which develop relational capacities and citizenship, and are discussed in the next section.

6.2.2 Building relational citizenship, and the importance of recognition

The recognition of peers helps to rebuild self-respect, overcome isolation, and forms a bridge between identity and citizenship. In many of the stories, the co-researchers described feelings of isolation, and an important shift takes place when they have the opportunity to meet and talk to others. This opportunity can be in the space of more formal arenas for citizen participation, but is more likely to be facilitated informally, through participating in local groups or volunteering in local organisations.

Colin in Bristol gives an account of his progress from isolation to a sense of belonging, and identifies how he began to build relationships with neighbours and participate in a more formal space:

> *'At first, I thought I was isolated because I live on my own. After I retired, I did not do much. After about a year, I changed. This was because I got to know neighbours who were members of the area housing committee. They persuaded me to join them. After this, I had conversations with them. I decided to do some more voluntary work'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).

Participating in the housing committee gave Colin a sense of self-worth and the feeling that in working with others, he was earning their respect. He chooses not to share his emotions in his story, and is the only storyteller who chose not to talk about his past. Yet his next words suggest that he has struggled and felt diminished previously:

> *'I felt that I was becoming equal to my peers, doing something useful in the community'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).

Alfie also finds that doing something 'useful in the community' brings him recognition and a sense of validation. Unlike Colin, he expresses a powerful and emotional sense of belonging and self-worth. He describes his feelings when people come on a coach trip that he has organised:

> '*my self-worth goes right up in the air, my self-esteem goes up in the air, I walk tall, because there's people that have come on my coach trip that have got children, it doesn't matter what nationality they are, I'm not colour racist, I welcome everyone, through my experience in my life I've helped them experience something that they wouldn't have been able to afford. That's what makes me happy'* (Alfie, interview, Bristol).

Alfie's experience is in the less formal space of a community activity. Maria in Matagalpa also connects the change in her life with her community work, which enabled her to construct a positive identity for herself through sharing her knowledge to help others:

> '*I felt that the talks and the knowledge I was sharing helped me to get out of a place where I was living with no self-esteem, where I wasn't me, I didn't have rights, and once I got organised in my community I began to identify [with this work]'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa).

Rosa observes the importance of gaining the recognition of others, which for her also comes through community work:

> *'When they recognise your work for the community you feel good, you feel good because it's important to have your efforts recognised'* (Rosa, River of Life workshop, Matagalpa).

Figure 16: Rosa walking with a neighbour in her community

She illustrates this in her digital story, in which she includes a photo of herself walking with a neighbour in the community (Figure 16).

Carolina also talks about how, through her participation as a young person in a children's rights organisation, she began to feel that she was being listened to, which gave her a sense of self-worth and validation:

> *'It was in 1998 that I felt that I was listened to and that my views were valued, and people listened to me. They invited me to participate in a children's movement that's called MILAVF Movimiento Infantil Alfonso Velasquez Flores. I began to participate in workshops on children at risk and children's rights and duties. This is when I began to speak and have views and felt that my views were valued. I feel like people take me into account' (Carolina, Digital Story, Matagalpa).*

Carolina feels 'taken into account', in contrast to the invisibility expressed by some at the beginning of their stories. The recognition of others generates a sense of self-worth, and connects people who have felt isolated, to a group or place. This relational dimension is centrally important – people needed to feel 'visible', to be seen, heard and taken into account. These insights suggest that citizen agency is personal but it is also relational, experienced through interaction with others; in the building, neighbourhood, or further afield (for example, Bartolo's participation with other members of his activist group, in national protest marches).

Figure 17: Community health promotion festival, Matagalpa (Maria's story)

Engaging in an activity with others – a shared lunch, a coach trip, or a community health promotion day - can bring recognition and validation for people who have lost a sense of their own agency through the processes of marginalisation discussed in Chapter Five. Recognition brings feelings of acceptance and belonging, and a sense of themselves as part of a wider community of citizens, which these findings suggest are important ingredients for citizenship agency in both the Nicaraguan and English settings. To some extent, the English citizenship discourse which emphasises social action in the community, or the Nicaraguan discourse which is concerned with community-based citizen leadership, reflect an awareness of the importance of investing in the relational dimensions of citizenship. However, the policies and discourses in both settings make a generic invitation to participate which does not take into account the identities and forms of marginalisation that some groups of people are experiencing. As a result, the citizenship 'offer' is likely to exclude them.

Chapter Four (4.3.2) discussed how governmental power at-a-distance operates through spaces such as the Family Cabinets in Nicaragua, yet these are also an arena in which actions which generate personal and relational agency, may take place. For instance, when Carolina is elected as the youth representative on the Family Cabinet:

> *'I feel like a positive citizen, because my views are listened to and valued … Now I'm representative of young people in the neighbourhood. They elected me as their coordinator'* (Carolina, digital story).

Colin also speaks of his positive experience of participation in the housing committee, where he gained the confidence to engage with the local authority:

> *'I decided I could also help look after the environment in the area. Bristol City Council did not always approve. We argued with them. We usually got our way in the end'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).

These spaces can offer an important opportunity to have voice, or to interact and work with others, and are significant spaces for citizens to develop skills and relationships for practising citizenship. However, co-researchers in Nicaragua are mindful of the risks of engaging with this space at a time when central government is using the structures to enforce a partisan agenda, and which at times they experience as undermining the rights of women and minority groups. Sara's example of being required to do Party work instead of community work when she joins the local Family Cabinet, illustrates how government control can reach down into the community through these structures (see 5.2.1). In this context, the alternative space of community-based organisations may offer a safer space in which to develop skills. These organisations provide access to the symbolic and material benefits of citizenship, without requiring Party allegiance. It could be argued that in so-doing, they undermine the authority of the state. However, this seems unfounded, since they work to educate people on rights and how to coordinate with the local authority, as Maria explains in her story:

> *'I joined a group in my community that worked with [Community Organisation] and the City Council. We also worked with the health ministry, [international NGO], [local NGO] amongst others to bring projects to our neighbourhood. This organisation also gave me training in human rights, laws, health, violence and other things. I then trained men and women and young people in my neighbourhood'* (Maria, digital story, Matagalpa).

The transitions that people have made from isolation to feeling a sense of agency, have often involved the support of an organisation, as is Alfie's case in Bristol, and Beatriz's in Matagalpa:

> *'I must reiterate that none of this would have been possible, if I had not found AA, and for that I am eternally grateful'* (Alfie, digital story, Bristol).

> *'I joined the women's network in Matagalpa, and that felt like a great moment in my life, I felt there was a space where I could be myself, where I could be with other women who thought like me, and we could support each other as we worked for other women in the communities'* (Beatriz, River of Life workshop, Matagalpa).

These organisations can facilitate informal spaces where people can meet each other in a supportive and non-judgemental environment, mindful that the organisation may be able or willing to recognise and support some identities, but not others. Such spaces enable relationships to develop which contribute to building relational citizenship.

In contexts of marginalisation, such as the settings in which this research took place, mainstream discourses and spaces of citizenship may need to be examined and critiqued, in order for people to feel that citizenship is something relevant or accessible to them. The third factor indicated by the research data is that developing a sense of the possibility of change is important for generating citizen agency. This can happen when marginalising narratives which create a sense of self-blame, are challenged and disrupted.

6.2.3 Disrupting marginalising narratives

Siisiäinen's (2014) argument is that transformative change becomes possible when a person becomes aware of a fundamental contradiction between their values or beliefs, and the values and norms of the wider environment in which they are living. The findings support this theory that awareness of such dissonance, contributes to a turning point. The personal stories of citizenship provide insights into the factors that contribute to a transition from feeling powerless and stuck, to a sense of possibility. Indeed, most stories describe a turning point at which co-researchers mark a transition, from feeling powerless to identifying themselves as being a citizen.

The digital stories of citizenship constructed by the co-researchers employ story arcs, through which they identified a critical moment, and created a 'turning point narrative' (Bruner 1994, in Hill and Katz, 2006). The story arc carries the audience from an initial setting (in many cases in both groups, this was a time of limited agency), through a period of great difficulty, darkness (no agency), through to a resolution. In the dark period, the power over them is primarily invisible – the power of technologies of government that are normalised and internalised into technologies of the self. '*I was living in silence*' (Maria); '*I felt like I was nobody'* (Lola)*; 'I was lost'* (Emilia); *'I thought I was isolated'* (Colin). And as Rosa observes, the structures around them created boundaries that limited their autonomy and sense of what is possible: '*I lived in a fantasy world, believing that everything that happened to me was normal'.*

A shift away from this situation of stasis and powerlessness, towards a sense of agency, is neither certain nor linear. Some experience setbacks and reversals (see for example Alfie's story and Ximena's story). For others, there is a moment of crisis. Lola and Samira experience a violent crisis which

undermines their rights as citizens, and enforces a dramatic change in their lives. These crises are articulated in their stories as turning points. Others tell of significant moments of crisis which are articulated as low points, when they were afraid, isolated or lost. Even so, the stories are narratives in which the storytellers recognise that they have used their agency. In a workshop to analyse the digital stories in Bristol, participants commented on this transformation.

Emilia: I've come a long way. It is starting to happen, slowly I can see positive progression. It's nice to know that others can actually see that. You spotted that about low self-esteem, I went from 100 to zero.

Alfie: I don't think achieving things is as important as a person's happiness. Without that nothing can be achieved.

Jack: Every story tells the story of power of being part of a community. Everyone here has benefited from being part of a community.

Emilia: I wrote down about Jack's, about power of choice. Positive and negative. When he had to retire, he didn't really want to.

Jack: I retired from active work, being involved with a lot of other people, and suddenly my life if I didn't join the groups that I did, my life would have been dead, I'd have been sat at home. But I joined groups and I was out and about.

Emilia: Power of loss, power of choice I wrote. You lost things but gained it back.

Sarah: I noticed there was a transition in everybody's story. A change came about because of something they weren't in control of. But through decisions that everybody took, it gave them back some control and power.

Colin: Yes, it was with me.

Jack: And with me.

Jo: What did you hear in Samira's story, what's the message?

Jack: The most powerful one is being part of a group, being part of a community.

Alfie: She's come from a war-torn situation, to come from there, she was going to be wary, so coming from where she did, if there were people to give her confidence in herself, it's the first contact they make with people, if they're made welcome, the first point of contact is the most important. It's a good chance of communities integrating as well.

Emilia: Positivity and light at the end of the tunnel. With your positivity – that came across very well.

Jack: The power of self-determination.

Sarah: I thought that Saada was empowered through other people's support when she needed it, and she now asserts a power through her help to others, because she realized what an impact that can have, and she wants to give of that to other people.

Alfie: I remember when I was organising that coach trip – when I arrived [at your house] we didn't have anyone, but when I left your house the coach was full. That gave me such joy, a sense of connection with other people. Your personality came out there. You're accepted by your own people quite widely.

Box 5: Group analysis of the digital stories, Bristol

For Alfie, the critical moment was when a friend took him to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which offered a sense of possibility and a bridge to 'a new life':

Figure 18: 'new life' - Alfie, digital story, Bristol

'… until an old friend suggested I come to AA with him. After a while I began to take AA seriously. I had been living without electricity for 2 years. Power was eventually restored. I had started to pay back my debts to society. Things started to improve for me, as new life started to flow in' (Alfie, digital story, Bristol). He illustrates this transition in his story, using an image of a rainbow (Figure 18).

For Rosa, the support she received to secure a small plot of land on which to build her own house, was a turning point. She had suffered abuse in the family home, and again as an undocumented worker in Costa Rica. Having her own house – albeit very basic - was hugely important to her; it gave her independence and a sense of self-worth. In her digital story, she dedicates an image to it.

Figure 19: 'the door', Samira, digital story, Bristol

In Bristol, for Samira the support of a local organisation is pivotal for her, and the door to this organisation is symbolic of the transition from feeling alone and desperate as an asylum seeker new to Bristol, to feeling accompanied and supported.

'Then I saw a door with a big sign, and I went in to ask for help. The door was open' (Samira, digital story, Bristol).

The images that Alfie and Samira use in their stories – a rainbow, a doorway – are powerful metaphors, suggestive of transition and the possibility of positive change. They convey a sense of future agency, that it is possible to change the situation. Maria also conveys this transition using evocative words in her story:

> *'Until one day, I joined a group in my community … this organisation also gave me training in human rights, laws, health, violence and other things. I then trained men and women and young people in my neighbourhood. This gave me the strength to break the silence, and say "Enough!" I began to make my own decisions'.*

Maria's words articulate the agentive power that is required to move from a situation of stasis or resignation ('silence') to action. In order for her to disrupt the status quo and challenge social norms, she needed the support and recognition of others, to generate the personal and relational agency needed to take action in her own life.

> ***Maria:*** *Something I liked [in our stories] is that I think we didn't mention the struggle to validate yourself as a citizen, because it's something that not all of us have, and it's a big struggle to achieve it. Because when we began with the stories, and we talked about citizenship and said that it's this, it's that, it's about identity –citizenship becomes like a form of power, and you begin to identify with what you're going to do which is to fight for rights. This is what I see in the stories.*
>
> ***Lola:*** *So, what being a citizen is, it's about this spirit of struggle, right?*
>
> ***Maria:*** *When you tell your story, it's there, there's your spirit of struggle. We can see it in people's life, in the workplace, in the neighbourhood.*

Box 6: Dialogue on watching the digital stories, Matagalpa

Across both sites and in most of the stories, there is a moment when the storyteller reaches a point at which they can see the possibility of change. The research design of this study included participatory methods to link first- and second-person reflection through discussing and analysing each other's stories (see Chapter Three sections 3.2 and 3.4). This is valuable because it links personal with shared experience, enabling the individual to identify common experiences which are underpinned by processes and power relations in wider society.

> *Jo: Is there anything that you saw as similar – there are lots of differences.*
>
> *Jack: The thing that I saw was that some are trying to get together and do things as a community.*
>
> *Samira: it's different but it's the same – for the middle of the stories – everybody got difficulties, but ended up with the power within. It's the same thing, different countries but the picture coming from your brain is a bit the same.*
>
> *Emilia: Something in common is determination.*
>
> *Samira: I can't see any different people, different colours.*
>
> *Colin: Gay rights are different between the two countries, and there they get more sexual harassment in their employment which I imagine is rather a drawback … though it still goes on here.*
>
> *Alfie: Sexual harassment in the workplace - it still happens here but they can do more about it than they could before.*

Box 7: Group analysis of the digital stories, Bristol

This second person reflection was extended by the power analysis exercise introduced to collectively analyse the digital stories. In this workshop, Bartolo observed how the turning points in the stories represent moments of disruption, when the storyteller recognises that their powerlessness or lack of citizenship must stop or change. He suggests that speaking out against one's lack of power, is in itself an act of citizenship – a way of taking power back.

> *'Power differentiates between people in a group, it gives them different values. So of course, when we start to say that we don't agree with this, that we don't like it, as Carolina said in her story, and as all of us have said in our stories, when we say "No! It shouldn't be this way!" then by saying that we are taking action, and an action will have a reaction'* (Bartolo, power workshop, Matagalpa).

Edmiston and Humpage (2018) identify three responses to the prevailing neoliberal welfare settlement in New Zealand: resignation, resistance, or efforts to reconfigure (or transform). This distinction is very relevant to the narratives of the co-researchers in this research. Moreover, the digital stories in this research provide some further insight which is not included in Edmiston and

Humpage's account, into *why* there are differentiated responses. For example, not all the stories follow through from the turning point (at which resistance is generated) through to a resolution and transformation. One in particular – that of Ximena – begins in an upbeat way, but ends on a note of frustration and exhaustion:

> *'I began university full of enthusiasm, with my white coat and plans to help people that need me. […]*
> *… I'm disappointed with the justice system – my rights as a woman are not protected. I don't feel that justice is done – there's so much injustice towards women. I ask for respect. But having to keep asking can wear a human being out' (Ximena, digital story, Matagalpa).*

While she sees the injustice around her, Ximena has not experienced a shift in her own agency. She is not resigned, in fact she continues to resist, but does not feel that anything changes. One explanation is that she has not found the support of a wider collective or organisation which can provide the space in which to build relational agency, so that her emerging political subjectivity is supported in ways that are also respectful of her subjectivities as a young woman, single mother, professional etc. Without this support, she is struggling to build a sense of personal agency. It is interesting that she was particularly keen for the group to continue meeting after this research was completed, and made close friends with Bartolo, who is an LGBT and human rights activist.

Ximena's exhaustion is echoed by Emilia in Bristol, when she comments on feeling powerless as she tries to cope when her benefits are suspended: *'I don't know how I'll get by - the emotional and mental strain'* (Emilia, interview, Bristol). In both settings, the women encounter a combination of institutional dynamics, economic marginalisation and gender-based discrimination which exhaust their efforts to challenge them and put them at risk of being overwhelmed. This would suggest that gender-sensitive policy measures and framings of citizenship rights are urgently needed. In order to make a difference to the realities of everyday life for young lone mothers such as Ximena and Emilia, these policies need to address gender-based violence and discrimination as well as economic exclusion.

However, in both sites there are also examples in the stories in which the turning points resolve in positive ways, suggesting a shift or transformation from feeling powerless to having agency as citizens. The next section considers these examples, and puts forward the argument that political subjectivity is generated when the personal and relational capacities discussed above are supported; and when people have access to a space and vocabulary to critique the institutional and social practices that drive marginalisation.

6.3 Generating citizenship agency through critique and resistance

Chapter Five demonstrated how citizenship is experienced according to different identities, and in different spaces, and highlighted how multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation can erode citizen agency. Scholarship discussed in Chapter Two however, identified agency in everyday *resistance* to exclusionary discourses and practices (Isin, 2008; Davies, 2014). In this section, the findings are analysed to consider whether and how resistance and agency are generated in the co-researchers' lives and narratives.

6.3.1 Awareness of injustice – 'critical consciousness'

It has been argued above that, to generate citizen agency, the recognition of one's own worth, and a sense of connection with others, are necessary. The previous section also identified 'turning points' which mark when a person becomes aware of the possibility of change. Another significant factor that has emerged in this research, is the importance for the person to recognise that they have rights, and that their situation may relate to the denial or violation of these rights rather than their own personal failure, including with relation to their social identities. This awareness of rights being practised or denied in everyday life is key, because it constitutes a critical reassessment which is generative of political subjectivity.

Lola has a particular, historical perspective because of her involvement from adolescence in the Nicaraguan insurrection and revolution. Early in her story, she talks proudly of her citizenship, and her sense of belonging and contribution as an activist with the Sandinista Front in the early years of the revolutionary government. As her story unfolds, she highlights the gap between the revolutionary rhetoric of the 1970s and 1980s, which is revived with the discourse of 'citizen power' in the 2010s, and her own reality. Her euphoria at becoming a citizen of a democratic state, with the right to vote (see 5.1.1), dissipates as she experiences mistreatment from her colleagues because of her sexuality. She comments on this experience with political subjectivity; i.e. she relates the situation not to her own failure or error, but to her rights as a citizen: '*they trod on my rights and denied them' (*Lola, DST workshop, Matagalpa*).*

In a similar vein, Bartolo makes a link between his subjective experiences and his citizen agency (which he defines in terms of his 'capacity to critique, to speak out, to observe and to propose'), and suggests that these capacities for citizen agency are compromised by discrimination. Even so, by making this

link, he is demonstrating political subjectivity which is generative of citizenship agency. He finds that anti-gay discrimination intensifies other forms of exclusion he experiences from the state:

> *'there are other kinds of exclusion and discrimination, but if you add to these that you're from the LGBT community, if you are gay, if you're lesbian, if you're trans, this harms your situation even more; for example, I might not have been gay I might have been heterosexual, but I would still have had the same capacity to critique, to speak out, to observe and to propose, and these would still have been a problem, there would always have been a problem, but in presenting myself also as a homosexual person, this makes the situation worse, it's an aggravating factor'* (Bartolo, interview, Matagalpa).

It is likely that this level of critical engagement and analysis is enabled because both Lola and Bartolo are connected to LGBT communities or movements. In these communities, the concepts and vocabularies of rights, social justice and contestation are learnt, and they are spaces which enable the generation of the political subjectivity that both Lola and Bartolo demonstrate in their stories. As such, they constitute sites in which alternative discourses to the mainstream, can be developed.

The capacity to analyse and critique power relations and to challenge social attitudes and institutional discrimination is also evident amongst those women in the Nicaraguan group who had been in contact with women's organisations and movements. Ximena analyses the structural factors which, in her experience continue to discipline and control women through patriarchal values which are perpetuated through the institutions, despite the assurances of government that women are now enjoying 'open spaces in the political, social and labour spheres' (Radio Ya, 2015), as highlighted in Chapter Four (4.2.1). She observes:

> *'To relate this to citizenship, it is connected with the abuse of power by the state, and by people who, living in a sexist patriarchal culture, feel ownership over women's bodies. I'm disappointed with the justice system – my rights as a woman are not protected. I don't feel that justice is done – there's so much injustice towards women'* (Ximena, digital story, Matagalpa).

In contrast, participants in the English co-inquiry group did not identify as gay, neither did they mention any experience of women's collectives or movements. They do however identify structural injustices that they have experienced or that they witness in their environment, and try to analyse and challenge them. Colin, Jack and Emilia, identify a mismatch between policies and the realities of their everyday lives. Jack does not disclose if he was a member of a trades union during his working life, but an awareness of workers' rights informs his views on the need for equality between citizens. In the following comment, he appears to critique market processes operating in society that create exclusion

and resentment, and rejects the neoliberal (individualised, competitive) version of citizenship that is promoted by the state:

> *'To be treated equally is important although I fully realise that we can never all be equal … but everyone should be treated as equal. Competitive society is good, having people that have a good education, have got money, that's good. What isn't good is the feeling now, of discontent and anger for some reason'* (Jack, interview, Bristol).

Colin also makes reference both to structural injustice, with reference to the exploitation of immigrant workers, and the everyday racism that he encounters, and tries to challenge.

> *'Where I live, is an area where refugees come to live. I am annoyed when people tell me that they are inferior for some reason. After all, we were all born 'equal' in the eyes of the Church.*
>
> *Refugees should be encouraged to integrate and become good citizens. I know a lot of them are now doing a useful job on equal terms, but the terms are not always equal'* (Colin, digital story, Bristol).

Emilia's distress at the treatment she receives from the company managing her benefits, turns into a critique when she compares her lack of rights as a welfare claimant, to the rights she would have as an employee - '*if I was working … they're not going to stop [my wage] the day I'm supposed to be paid…'* (see 5.1.2). She is developing a more critical perspective on her situation, and rather than turning the blame onto herself, she identifies injustice and discrimination. Her critique draws our attention to the conflict between her own experience as a single mother dependent on benefits, and the wider discourses of rights and citizenship.

The English participants are not accessing the support of social movements, but they do have access to the everyday setting of the local community organisation which, through a range of activities, provides a space for encounters, reflection and dialogue. Courses that local organisations offer in Bristol tend to focus on meeting practical needs – managing debt and benefits, learning English, skills for employment. These do not tend to be spaces in which the capacity for critique is explicitly developed. Even so, the opportunity to learn a skill and meet other people can be transformative in itself. Samira for example, rebuilds her identity after the trauma of fleeing war and the struggle of acquiring residency in the UK, through studying, learning and making friends at the local community centre, which gives her a sense of belonging and possibility:

> *'… I came to the [Community Organisation] and went to see Mary. She took me to the Family Centre to meet the staff. This is the point that my happiness started, and my life began as a*

citizen. People here have helped me to learn, to get friends and they told me I can do anything. They believed in me. And I've been working here too' (Samira, digital story, Bristol).

This analysis indicates that a factor which enables people to develop the capacity for critique is access to alternative spaces in which it is possible to challenge marginalising discourses. In theory the more formal spaces for citizen participation such as the Neighbourhood Partnership or the Family Cabinet, can be sites for democratic dialogue between the state and citizens. However, as has been discussed, these spaces have atrophied in England due to budget reductions in local authorities which have required the diversion of community engagement funding into essential frontline services such as social care. The spaces in Nicaragua do exist, and enable participation, but do not allow debate. It is largely in alternative spaces that the co-researchers are able to generate alternative narratives of citizenship. The relevance of these alternative narratives is discussed in the next section.

6.3.2 Imagining alternative narratives of citizenship

The storytelling process is a creative one, in which the co-researchers construct their own narratives, accompanied by images they select themselves. They use their own words to talk about both their experiences of citizenship, of marginalisation (see Chapter Five) and their aspirations. The language they use diverges from the vocabulary of citizenship policy discourse. They do not identify with the terms of 'active citizens' (England) or 'citizen power' (Nicaragua); some even contest this vocabulary and suggest alternatives.

For example, in both sites the co-researchers challenged conditional policy approaches to citizenship that exclude some from citizenship benefits. In the English site they spoke about justice and equality. Equality is the title and focus of Colin's digital story, which for him is synonymous with citizenship. He begins his story asking '*What is equality? It is making certain that all citizens can live in harmony together*', and goes on to critique the discrimination he observes, saying *'after all, we were all born "equal" in the eyes of the Church*'. In the Nicaraguan site, Bartolo also challenges inequality, and refuses to accept that access to citizenship rights should be conditional:

> *'This has made me appreciate that you can't make universal rights conditional. The way things are, I feel vulnerable, I feel sad, I feel disappointed'* (Bartolo, DST workshop, Matagalpa).

Instead, in his story Bartolo imagines a form of citizenship which is not constrained according to social identities or political affiliation:

> *'And some time I will be able to enjoy my citizenship. And be a universal citizen in a world without barriers or borders that stop me from doing something with my life'* (Bartolo, digital story).

Maria, like Sara (see 5.3.1), rejects the governmental discourse of 'citizen power'. She prefers to talk of leadership in the community:

> *'Leadership has to be earned, by talking to people in the community. It's in the way that you talk, in the way you bring people together. I don't like how many people use their power – the mayor's representative in the community, the Family Cabinet and its coordinator – I don't like how they order people around. So, it's like the word 'power' doesn't fit with me'* (Maria, interview, Matagalpa).

In these ways, the co-researchers in both sites are using vocabulary that rejects government discourse, and propose a different way of understanding and constructing citizenship. Their narratives are critical of exclusion (especially Alfie and Colin in Bristol); of top-down approaches to citizenship (especially Bartolo and Lola in Nicaragua), of government discourses of citizenship they see as false or exclusionary, and of spaces for citizen participation which they see as manipulative (especially with reference to the Family Cabinet structure in Nicaragua). In their stories, the co-researchers use vocabulary and images that suggest respect for difference, recognition and acceptance of different identities, and prefigure alternative discourses of citizenship.

Box 8: Reflection on a peer's digital story, Bristol

Samira*: I like Colin's story very much. And that picture you took (of the mosaic) it's got everything, it's got a picture meaning for everything. It says peace, power, everything. I like that one* (Power analysis workshop, Bristol).

Figure 20: Mosaic, Colin's story

The visual dimension of the digital stories enabled the co-researchers to communicate their ideas through images as well as words, and in both sites, and for the younger participants in particular, images of hope are very important to their stories. The final images in Emilia and Rosa's stories express optimism for the future, and a sense of personal agency that they have earned and which they link to their citizenship. Emilia chose an image of birds flying upwards, Rosa chose a picture of herself with her arms stretching out wide in a gesture of happiness and self-confidence. Bartolo uses the image of a bird to communicate his aspiration for a citizenship which eliminates boundaries (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Image from Bartolo's digital story, Matagalpa

In both sites, the co-researchers are resisting discourses and practices which they find exclusionary. In Nicaragua, they reverse the citizen power discourse by redefining or reclaiming this 'power', rather than accepting a version which the state is bestowing on them. There is an explicit challenge to governmental discourses and spaces in Nicaragua, which are experienced in more tangible ways in the lives of most of the co-researchers. Lola for example rejects the government's approach to citizenship which she has experienced as not inclusive, and her critique also generates an alternative, which is to look within the community for (relational) citizenship agency:

> *'The feeling as a citizen is one of being powerless. However, together we can achieve things in the community which are good for everyone'* (Lola, digital story, Matagalpa).

in England co-researchers appeal for new definitions of what it means to be a citizen, based on inclusion, recognition and equality. They are less explicit than the Nicaraguan group in their challenge to governmental discourses, practices and spaces. They have less tangible experience of spaces of

citizen participation, and of visible manifestations of state control. Instead they challenge the hidden processes, vocabularies and norms that marginalise, particularly with relation to socio-economic status. Emilia comes the closest to critique when she talks about how her benefits were suspended, although because this service has been outsourced to a private sector service provider, she questions their practice without directly attributing her criticism to government. Both approaches fit with Foucault's (1983) notion that the power of governmentality can be challenged and reversed, and so is intrinsically linked to resistance. How this contestation can lead to acts of citizenship agency is discussed in the next and final section of this chapter.

6.3.3 From critique to acts of citizenship

Chapter Two (2.4.2) discussed how those whom we might call 'activist' are not only those who take to the streets, but also the 'everyday makers', who have recognised that they can make small, 'ordinary' acts of citizenship which contest marginalisation in their everyday lives (Davies, 2013; Neveu, 2015). In this research, everyday activist citizens are evidenced in both sites, practising (mainly) these small acts of citizenship. Section 6.3.1 established the significance of the awareness of injustice, that engenders what Hull and Katz (2006) have called 'agentive selves'. When Ximena refuses to accept sexual harassment at work, she is contesting discriminatory norms and practices which go unchallenged. This contestation is transformative, because she is taking action to claim her rights.

Others perform relational acts of citizenship which contest discrimination and injustice through small acts of solidarity. Colin challenges everyday discrimination by talking to new refugee tenants in the hallways of the tower block of social housing flats where he lives. Emilia helps others at the community centre to navigate advice on managing debt. Maria and Rosa help other women to challenge gender-based violence. Bartolo and Samira connect with and support others who are experiencing discrimination. These are small everyday acts which repoliticise citizenship because they are small acts of resistance to exclusionary discourses, spaces and practices.

These findings support Isin's (2008, p.39) argument that we need to focus on *acts* of citizenship which 'bring into being new actors as activist citizens'. They also call for greater attention to the small acts which contain the germ of political subjectivity. While often very small-scale, these acts of resistance to marginality, as Cornwall *et al.* (2008, p.8) put it, often run 'directly counter to the neoliberal model, demanding the redistribution of resources' as Colin does, 'challenging the operation of markets', as Jack does, 'or organising against state repression' as Bartolo does. These stories also evidence that citizens wish to be heard, to be visible, to be respected, and to contribute to society, as a foundation to their citizenship, in addition to accessing social and economic benefits.

Citizen agency is expressed in diverse ways in people's personal trajectories, as they ***contest*** the norms, discourses and spaces which relate to their different perspectives and experiences of marginalisation. These experiences generate different responses (escape, resist, or transform), suggesting that while contestation is central, it is expressed in differentiated ways and with differing degrees of political subjectivity for different citizens living in marginalised settings. At its most raw, personal and embodied, contestation manifests as the drive to ***escape***. This may be from violence, when the terms of engagement with family or society become intolerable, as was the case for Rosa and Maria who survive domestic violence, and Samira who survives war. Samira's story bears testament to this: '*I was scared. What was going to happen? I felt like I was going underground, into the dark. But when you've come from a war, you don't care, you just keep going. You will live, or you will die'.* According to Stephenson and Tsianos (2008, p.60) who write from the perspective of migration, 'escape is a creative, constructive move, one which radically alters the very conditions within which struggles over existence are conducted'. For Samira, and for Rosa and Maria in Matagalpa, reflecting on their escape led them to articulate it as creative, as an expression of agency in search of survival, but also of new more human, just and inclusive conditions.

In other cases, contestation is reflected in ***resistance*** to the norms, discourses and spaces which constrain their everyday lives. Colin, Jack and Alfie reject the isolation of retirement or of urban high-rise social housing, Emilia challenges welfare discourses and practices; Lola and Bartolo reject institutional discrimination. Yet, in their rejection of the discourses in which they find themselves marginalised or excluded, most of the participants ***transform*** this disconnect into some kind of action, at the neighbourhood or community level: speaking to Somali neighbours (Colin); getting involved with a local community organisation (Emilia, Samira, Alfie, Maria, Carolina, Rosa); or joining or setting up a local group (Carolina, Jack, Samira, Rosa).

For some, these are acts of recognising others, of solidarity. For example, Alfie, Rosa and Bartolo are motivated by their struggle against marginalisation to take action to support others experiencing similar issues, in different ways and at different levels. Alfie explains why he tries to engage people who are struggling with isolation and/or addiction in the local community, through organising coach trips:

> *'My motivation in this is to do it for people who feel cut off from society. The isolation that council flats can bring, to give them confidence and self-worth'* (Alfie, digital story, Bristol).

Once Rosa has found confidence and capacity to critique the norms which had kept her silent, she transforms this capacity into action to help herself, but also to challenge injustice towards women

more generally. She offers herself as a resource for other women who are also starting to challenge gender-based violence:

> '*in the neighbourhood, the women come looking for me all the time to help them, older women too … I go with them when they need to report [cases of GBV], I help them with projects, I run to [women's organisation], to the radio stations, to the council …' (*Rosa, interview, Matagalpa).

Similarly, Bartolo has critically reflected on his experiences, which has led him to observe how it is not him alone but the LGBT community which is marginalised through institutional as well as social practices. This has motivated him to try to bring about change at the national level:

> *'in my journey, I've strengthened my commitment and visibility at national level as a human rights activist, and specifically of the LGBT community'* (Bartolo, interview, Matagalpa).

The differentiated responses between the two research cohorts are in part explained by context: the Nicaraguan group are more critical of government practices, which they experience as paternalism, party patronage and corruption. This can be attributed to a greater sense of disillusionment about their experience of citizenship, given the promise of empowered citizenship that the new Sandinista Front Government offered in 2007. The co-researchers have had to critique and challenge the Sandinista Front's discourse, which extended powerfully into their communities and their emotions, and develop alternative discourses. In England it could be argued that there is less government interest in imposing a mode of citizen agency, and less investment in mechanisms for reaching out to citizens; hence also less experience or awareness of explicitly exercising or demanding citizenship.

There is also a differentiated sense of citizen agency *within* the cohorts. This can be explained in part because participants in the groups were at different points in their own processes of reflection. Some have built personal capacities for critical reflection (as discussed in 6.2.1), and saw their experiences as linked to systemic issues and were able to articulate their discontent, but were not yet able to act to transform their situation. Ximena for example, is frustrated with a society which disrespects women, but unable to find a way through as she has not as yet found ways in which to strengthen her sense of relational citizenship, and finds herself unsupported.

Others have moved into a mode of relational citizenship (discussed in 6.2.2), where they are motivated to reach out to others around them, in small but significant ways; talking to people in their block of flats (Colin), organising a multi-cultural lunch for school parents (Samira), giving talks on rights and domestic violence (Maria). Emilia is supporting people who are facing similar problems to her own.

She volunteers at the Centre where she herself had attended courses which helped to build her confidence:

> *'I started doing Boost finance, where I was meeting and greeting clients … doing filing, giving guidance and advice to people with benefit issues, electric issues … I'd direct them to the right person to speak to … little do they know that I've got a bit of knowledge behind things'* (Emilia, interview, Bristol).

Rosa already volunteers in the community, but wants to support more women who are struggling:

> *I've seen that many women can't work because they have to take care of the children, so I want to see if I can get Infancy without Borders [an international CSO] to help us build a children's centre, so that the mums can go to work and leave their children there. I've got this idea, and I'm not sure how but I'm going to do it, I'm going to fight for it*' (Rosa, interview, Matagalpa).

In both cases, the women have recognised and critiqued the injustice in their own situations, and are now concerned with the injustices that other people are facing. Their response is to support them to survive, but not to take to the streets to protest.

Others are at a point where they are taking their activism to the level of social movement and street protest. When Bartolo realises that the LGBT community will not find justice because of prejudice in the police force, his crisis of frustration and disillusionment becomes a force for change:

> '*from that time onwards, my social responsibility was everything to* me …*at that point I reaffirmed my commitment with the LGBT community, and I left behind my activism with children, adolescents, youth, citizen participation and all those things … I did this once I felt that I wasn't being heard; it was as if my level of impact, of speaking out was growing towards street activism, getting organised with people with strategies of confrontation, aggression, violence, it was all kicking off … to see that they [the police] are not going to solve anything, just fill in the form, made me reject the whole system, and take to the street to confront the police with music and banners'* (Bartolo, interview, Matagalpa).

Figure 22: Close up of armed police officer, central square, Matagalpa (Bartolo's story)

As an activist, Bartolo has performed multiple small-scales acts of citizenship. However, his growing frustration at the continued exclusionary and discriminatory practices around him, has brought him to the point of organised protest, rather than small-scale acts of contestation. This interview took place in 2016. With reference to citizen agency and resistance to neoliberal governmentality, Kennett and Dukelow (2018, p.460) have argued that citizens may resist through small-scale acts and practices of solidarity and support, although they question the potential for 'resistive practices' to be scaled up. In Nicaragua, the small-scale resistances of pensioners, young people, the LGBT community, the women's movement, indigenous groups and rural farmworkers, came together in April 2018 as a coordinated national protest. They were contesting proposed social security reforms, but also demanding their rights as citizens - with different identities and experiences of marginalisation - to be heard, to be included and for the state to be accountable to them.

The stories in this study confirm that citizens escape, resist and transform marginalising discourses and spaces of citizenship, through small-scale acts and practices of solidarity and support, in their building, block or local community organisation. Recent events in Nicaragua underline the significance of these acts, and their potential to be scaled up when people are consistently denied voice and recognition. For policy, there is also a message about the need to allow alternative discourses and spaces to flourish, and to enable them as spaces for dialogue rather than shut them down or control them, as has been happening in Nicaragua and – to a lesser, but still significant degree – in England. As a result, many are feeling the lack of spaces in which to access and practise their citizenship.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has found that a sense of citizen agency is enabled when identities which have been devalued are recognised. This involves both a personal process of building self-worth, and a relational dimension whereby the recognition of others fosters a sense of citizen identity and belonging (relational citizenship). It has argued that citizenship agency may be generated when marginalising discourses are disrupted, and that this disruption may take place in spaces which enable cognitive dissonance to trigger the critical reflection necessary to generate contestation. It has demonstrated that contestation is expressed in a range of settings, principally in the everyday and very local - in the neighbourhood, in the workplace, or in the space of a local community-based organisation, but which may also be scaled up to acts of mobilisation and protest at other levels. Contestation is expressed through a range of actions: escape, resist/reject or transform, and the different responses depend both on contextual factors, including the strength of governmental discourses and spaces, access to alternative narratives and spaces, and the particular experiences of marginalisation.

The lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in marginalised settings in Matagalpa and Bristol is of exclusion and marginalisation, but also of processes through which they have developed a sense of themselves *personally and relationally* as citizens. Their capacity to act (agency) is intimately connected with contestation; for some this is expressed at the individual level, while for others their experience of marginalisation has been transformed into relational agency – small acts of solidarity and reciprocity. These acts are apparent in both settings, but notably significant in the English context of 'social desolidarisation' (Hartmann and Honneth, 2006, in Dukelow and Kennett, 2018), where prevailing media and political discourses frame problems as individual rather than societal (Lundström, 2013). In some cases in both settings, citizens perform acts of contestation which attempt to transform how citizenship is constructed. This is especially significant in the Nicaraguan context, where discourses and spaces of citizenship are powerful and far-reaching, and dissent is not allowed.

It has emerged in this chapter that for people to understand themselves as citizens, and to perceive themselves as having citizen *agency*, requires a process of individual and collective (first and second person) reflection. The examples of a strong sense of citizen entitlement and agency came from one participant in each site for whom the prevailing discourses and spaces of citizenship had endorsed their particular identities (Jack as a working tax-paying citizen, and Lola as a revolutionary worker citizen, see 6.1). For others, whose identities were undermined or unacknowledged in prevailing discourses and spaces, a sense of citizen agency was not automatic, and needed to be engendered.

This has important implications for policy and practice relating to 'active citizenship'; that it is not enough to create a space for citizen participation or action. The experiences which may limit individuals' capacity to act need to be taken into account, in order to build confidence for citizen agency. This highlights the importance of discourses and spaces which acknowledge and respect difference and build self-esteem. To generate agency may require triggering cognitive dissonance or rupture with marginalising mainstream discourses or norms, in order to gain *'the strength to break the silence and say "enough!"'*. Collectives such as women's organisations and LGBT movements are playing an important role in providing space in which this critical awareness can develop, and some community organisations may also play a role in supporting people to rebuild the personal and relational capacities that are needed.

Finally, the stories discussed here reveal how the process of developing political subjectivity and citizen agency is not linear; acts in themselves engender a sense of citizenship, but governmentality works together with social norms to undermine agency. Agency takes different forms, and escape, rejection and transformation were identified. The importance of everyday acts of survival should be recognised as acts of citizen agency – survival in violent circumstances, and also the daily challenge of survival in hostile policy environments and economic hardship. In some circumstances, and especially with the additional support of some kind of group, organisation or movement, citizen agency can also seek to transform, as well as to survive or reject, injustice and discrimination.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to explore how citizenship is understood and practised by citizens living in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua. Citizenship in the modern democratic state is premised on political, social and civic rights and responsibilities. However, the extent to which these rights are experienced as accessible may vary in context, as citizens navigate increasingly insecure employment conditions, a reduced social contract, spatial or economic disadvantage. In contexts of reduced state provision of core public services, sub-contracting to commercial providers, or the closing of civic space, interpretations of citizenship rights become more critical, and more contested.

The implications are that the premise of universal and equal citizenship rights for all may be undermined, and citizenship experienced by some as conditional or exclusionary. This is likely to be exacerbated for people living in marginalised settings (Harvey, 2005; Lister, 2013; Contreras *et al*., 2018). In the light of findings that citizenship is experienced as 'differentiated' (Smith, 2012) or 'diminished' (Houtzager and Acharya, 2011), universal concepts and discourses of citizenship need to be reassessed (Clarke *et al*., 2014), especially in contexts of informality, unemployment, corruption and clientelism. If citizenship policies assume universality when in practice citizenship is experienced as differentiated, governments run the risk of marginalising or alienating groups of citizens, while claiming to empower them (Mackert and Turner, 2017). A deeper understanding of how people experience citizenship can generate evidence of marginalising dynamics, and offer insights into the elements needed to achieve more inclusive policies and programming.

This thesis makes the case that a deeper understanding of citizenship requires an approach which analyses how citizenship is constructed and experienced at both macro and micro levels. It brings together two key approaches to researching citizenship. Firstly, a neoliberal governmentality approach which analyses how governmental power operates through more formal policies and governance spaces, but also how these reach into and combine with other social dynamics in informal citizenship spaces and relationships. Secondly, an approach that analyses how citizenship is subjectively constructed and experienced from a citizen perspective, which can illuminate how governmental discourses and spaces of citizenship are perceived and felt by citizens in their everyday lives, and also how they understand and practise citizen agency. This combination is appropriate for the study of citizenship, understood as both a construct and an embodied practice that sits in the interstices between the person and the system.

The research has been guided by three core questions:

1. How is citizenship constructed by the state, and how is it operationalised in the diverse national settings of England and Nicaragua?
2. What is the lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in these diverse marginalised settings?
3. What are the dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens and groups in England and Nicaragua?

This chapter synthesises the analysis corresponding to these three questions, and reflects on the learning that has emerged about citizenship across the two contexts. It also considers the methodological contribution of bringing a participatory analysis of subjective experiences of citizenship together with more traditional qualitative approaches. The core research questions are considered in turn in section 7.2, followed by a discussion on the contribution of the findings of this study to the body of knowledge on citizenship. Section 7.3 discusses the contribution of the methodological approach, the specific research methods used, their implications for researching citizenship, and the limitations of this study. Section 7.4 offers some recommendations for future research and policy.

7.2 Research Findings

7.2.1 How citizenship is understood by the state and operationalised through policy discourses and spaces

This study finds that citizenship is framed by both the English and the Nicaraguan state in terms of rights invoking the universality and equality of Marshall's (1950) triad of rights which convey protection by the nation state, and inclusion in the 'societal community' (Parsons, 1977). In both settings, a discourse of 'restoring rights' to citizens and communities suggests an inclusive and rights-based citizenship agenda. However, this discourse is mobilised as part of a political agenda to discredit the policies of previous governments; one left-of-centre (led by England's Labour Party) and one right-of-centre (led by Nicaragua's Constitutionalist Liberal Party); both accused in the rhetoric of the incoming government, of encroaching on citizens' rights. The study finds that citizens' rights are not universally restored, since citizenship is shaped through discourses and in spaces which, in both contexts, construct rights as conditional, either overtly or covertly. In England, universal citizen rights

are qualified by welfare regulations which impose conditions for eligibility, while in Nicaragua the conditions for accessing social programmes relate to political patronage, for example the non-official barrier of requiring party membership. This finding resonates with scholarship on citizenship in neoliberalised welfare states such as England and New Zealand (Edmiston and Humpage, 2017), which identifies how welfare conditionality impacts on citizenship. This study goes further and finds that policy discourses and dynamics in the anti-neoliberal setting of Nicaragua, also construct citizenship as conditional - on loyalty to the ruling party and the Catholic Church. It is also argued that the forms of conditional citizenship identified here undermine accountability between citizens and the state.

In both settings, this conditionality is underpinned by moralising discourses. These construct an idea of citizenship which empowers some and marginalises others, according to spatial, socio-economic and identity-based differences. In England, citizenship discourses privilege the work-ready and construct a negative idea of citizens who are not in work or seeking work, which impacts on how citizenship is experienced according to age, gender and disability/mental health, and immigrant status. In Nicaragua, citizenship is constructed through discourses and in spaces with strong moral overtones that combine an appeal to the socialist value of solidarity, with the paternalistic requirement of obedience. This confirms that in both settings, a moral dimension is employed to construct and reinforce particular ideas about the desired qualities and behaviours of citizens. This resonates with the work of neoliberal governmentality theorists who furthermore identify the use of moralising discourses as a strategy to internalise responsibility (Rose and Miller, 1992; Gershon, 2011; Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016).

Spaces of citizenship were also considered, in terms of how the state facilitates and shapes citizen action through mechanisms for participation at the local level. Discourses of 'citizen power' in Nicaragua and 'active citizenship' in England, were found to be in tension with practices which extend state control into the community, and into individual people's lives. In England, citizenship is shaped through a 'social action' agenda, which ties citizen action to community organising or to the national citizenship programme. Both mechanisms encourage participation in the form of volunteering or social action, but fail to acknowledge the structural barriers to volunteering that some experience. Neither do they promote the critical citizenship capacities which are associated in the literature with claiming and exercising rights and democratic engagement (Foucault, 1980; Habermas, 1989; Mayo, 2000; Martin and Waring, 2018). In Nicaragua, the closing down of autonomous civil society space as the Christian socialist blend of 'direct democracy' shifts further towards authoritarianism, significantly reduces the possibility of critical citizen agency.

The implication of these forms of control is the hollowing out or manipulation of citizen action, so that the democratic content of spaces for participation is compromised. The potential complementarity of decentralised citizen and government action as premised by governance theory (see Chapter Two, section 2.3), is undermined by the withdrawal of funding and increased emphasis on market participation in England; or by centralising and partisan tendencies in Nicaragua. Rather than empower citizens, these dynamics shift the power to the private sector and/or the state. In both settings, a backlash was identified against an enlarged role for civil society organisations in governance, accompanied by increased efforts by the state to shape the kind of citizen action that is enabled. Governmentality theory proved useful for analysing these processes in the hybrid setting of Nicaragua as well as the neoliberal context of England, and drew attention to the state's intervention in civil society and the community, and its deployment of a moral discourse of citizenship in both settings.

Carmel and Harlock (2008) have argued that local structures of citizen participation are sites of control, but in Bristol the hollowing out and subsequent closure of the Neighbourhood Partnerships has removed this space as an available technology of governmentality. This research finds that in England currently, governmentality operates more through welfare discourses and through control of the funding and agendas of organisations that work with citizens or distribute welfare. In Nicaragua where the spaces for citizen participation have proliferated, partisan practices are shaping these into more disciplinary spaces, making access to resources conditional on party allegiance and requiring community volunteers to be party activists. Moreover, here spaces are also shaped by religious discourses with a moral and gendered content.

Chapter Two made the case that using a governmentality approach to explore citizenship requires additional emphasis on citizen agency. Introducing the question of agency has helped to illuminate how policy discourses work to shape what is recognised as legitimate citizen action. In both settings there has been a resurgence of interest in 'active' citizens, invited to participate in their communities in social action. Government discourses of 'citizen power' and 'active citizenship' assume that citizens who have been powerless, or inactive, will be able to step up once government has issued the invitation. However, this research has identified marginalising discourses operating in both contexts that devalue some identities and lead to experiences of exclusion and disempowerment.

A factor contributing to this marginalisation, is the lack of coherence between welfare policies and citizenship discourses. Citizens are unable to challenge those policies and programmes which affect their daily lives and wellbeing; rather, their participation is encouraged to plug the gaps where the state is withdrawing (England), or on terms which are set by Party cadre rather than according to

citizens' priorities and concerns (Nicaragua). Furthermore, in England the social entrepreneur/ volunteer construct relies on the agency of those citizens who are already active. In this way, a volunteer citizen is encouraged in both contexts, constructed as an ideal citizen who is ready to participate by volunteering their time in the community. This ideal active citizen is heroic and moral, a version of Isin's (2004) neoliberal bionic citizen, with variations in context. In England, the heroic citizen must be ready to perform voluntary social action in the community, even while volunteering is seen as a route into employment for those who are disadvantaged. In Nicaragua, the heroic citizen contributes to the national project through taking up their revolutionary, Christian and solidary duties in the community, and set aside any conflicts this generates with relation to their gender, sexuality or other identities (see 7.2.2, below).

Despite the endorsements of volunteering in government discourse, there has been a deprioritisation of local mechanisms for democratic participation in England. This is justified as a necessary measure to reduce public spending, yet mechanisms for citizen engagement are widely promoted in Nicaragua where there is much less public resource available. That said, while in Nicaragua these mechanisms enable extensive participation, they do not allow democratic dialogue and debate, since they have become vertical channels for control and communication. This suggests that investment in mechanisms for citizen participation and voice is a political decision not an economic one, but that these spaces are vulnerable to co-option and need to be autonomous from partisan interests if they are to fulfil their promise as an inclusive space for citizen agency.

From the macro-level and state-centred analysis of this first research question and area of inquiry, the research shifted to the micro-level, to engage with the perspectives of participants in Bristol and Matagalpa.

7.2.2 The lived experience of citizenship and contestation of people living in marginalised settings in Nicaragua and England

In both settings, people thought of their citizenship in terms of political and/or social rights, but these rights were at times experienced as denied or inaccessible. Most experienced both economic hardship and other forms of marginalisation which mediated their access to social, spatial, legal or political rights. This marginalisation translated in people's experiences as a loss of citizenship, or a sense of exclusion or 'non-citizenship', and was linked to a sense of lacking agency. Citizen agency is experienced in the everyday as a sense of self-worth (positive identity) and a sense of belonging, often taking action with and on behalf of others in the community. The research finds that such positive

identities can be mobilised by some, for example through the perception that a full working life conveys entitlement to political citizenship (Jack in Bristol); or the experience of contributing to a national project in which they are deeply invested (Lola in Matagalpa). These identities match the prevailing governmental discourses of the economically active citizen (England) and the participatory citizen (Nicaragua). However, both also experience disempowerment as citizens, when aspects of their identities no longer fit with these discourses.

Hence, a lack of citizen agency is connected with the denial of rights, and when identities are devalued or not recognised. Citizenship is felt to be further compromised, when people must navigate the convergences of economic and spatial, as well as identity-based forms of marginalisation. In England, citizens experienced isolation and exclusion because of age, mental health, asylum status or the experience of claiming welfare benefits. In Nicaragua, citizens experienced isolation because of gender-based violence in the home or workplace, and discrimination because of gender or sexuality. In both sites, poverty magnified their experiences of powerlessness. This evidence resonates with Samov and Yishai's (2018) conceptualisation of fragmented citizenship. The participatory inquiry enabled the disaggregation of experiences of (non) citizenship, and identified factors which drive this fragmentation. The diversity of stories and responses to the idea of citizenship illustrate how processes of exclusion impact in a range of ways on how people experience their citizenship, and operate through social identities such as gender, sexuality, disability and age, as well as through economic and spatial circumstances.

The stories also illustrate how citizenship is experienced in physical and emotional, as well as cognitive dimensions. The literature indicates that citizens are shaped and manipulated by governmentality, to feel 'appropriate emotions' (de Wilde & Duyvendak, 2016), or to motivate them to participate (Gregorio and Merolli, 2016). The evidence presented in this thesis advances our understanding of how governmentality operates through the emotions, and how it impacts on citizens' sense of agency. In both settings, citizens expressed their agency as undermined by shame and stigma; in England particularly the shame of not being in work and dependent on benefits, and of mental or physical ill-health; in Nicaragua, the shame of gender-based violence, or of a sexual identity that is stigmatised. Participants linked these emotions to a reduced or non-citizenship.

These findings contribute to the field of citizenship scholarship by identifying how government discourses combine with social norms in ways which produce physical and psychological impacts, which is less well articulated in the literature. Relating these impacts to a sense of political citizenship is a key finding in this research. Edmiston and Humpage (2017) suggest a classification of responses to the marginalising discourses and practices of welfare policy in New Zealand (resignation, resistance

or reconfiguration). This research extends and further nuances their findings to show that contestation is expressed through a range of actions: escape/survival, defiance/resistance or transformation, and the different responses depend in part on the access to alternative discourses and spaces. In this study, acts of escape or of survival are considered to be forms of agency and hidden forms of contestation, when they are expressed in marginalised or hostile environments.

Furthermore, Edmiston and Humpage do not discuss the factors that bring about these differentiated responses, or how a person may move from one kind of response to another. My own research offers an original perspective as it identifies how a turning point marks a shift in response, from hopelessness to survival and escape (e.g. Samira who flees Somalia, or Maria who leaves a violent relationship); or from defiance and resistance to transformation (e. g. Bartolo whose anger at discrimination turns into activism with a social movement). Contestation of marginalisation is expressed through critique, and also through performing small acts of solidarity and reciprocity. This is manifested in both sites, suggesting that in the English context, the neoliberalisation (individualisation, responsibilisation, commodification) of the citizen can be contested. In the Nicaraguan context, it suggests that even in spaces in which visible and hidden forms of government power operate to shape their actions, citizens can find the possibility of critique, and to perform small autonomous acts of citizen agency.

7.2.3 The dynamics shaping subjectivities, meanings, and practices for marginalised citizens in Nicaragua and England

The experiences summarised above suggest that the dynamics of economic and spatial marginalisation, and their interaction with social attitudes which devalue certain identities, are shaping subjectivities, meanings and practices for marginalised citizens, and undermining citizen agency for some, since agency was felt to be deeply personal and linked to identities. Chapter Five demonstrated that people experience their citizenship through a combination of identities, which are subject to social hierarchies that are often reinforced (or unchallenged) in government policies and discourses, resulting in experiences of exclusion and *non*-citizenship. It has shown how technologies of governmentality which shape citizenship operate through gender, sexuality, and other identity-based categories, through which the subject is disciplined. Government discourses interact with social prejudice, and normalise the marginalisation of women experiencing gender-based violence, or citizens who identify as gay, or who struggle with mental health issues. In Nicaragua, these findings highlight the need to interrogate prevailing citizenship discourses and challenge the generic discourse of social justice which tries to persuade that the exclusion of some identity-based issues is acceptable. This confirms Heumann's (2014) argument that the discourse of the Sandinista Front government

marginalises women, but my research also identifies sexuality as a marginalised identity which impacts on citizenship. In England, the findings similarly highlight the need to challenge generic discourses of citizenship which are at odds with the prevailing responsibilising and moralising welfare discourses.

Despite these marginalising discourses, citizens continue to aspire to a democratic relationship with their governments and their communities. While most experience at times their citizenship to be conditional, fragmented or even 'cancelled' (see Lola's story, section 5.1.2), they imagine and aspire to an inclusive citizenship that challenges marginalising discourses in each setting. The mismatch between their aspirations and the realities of their lives and their experience of the institutions around them, at times creates a critical disconnect as Habermas (1987) has argued. This study has shown how, in some circumstances, people can critically engage with this disconnect to generate a sense of agency, and practise citizenship in ways which give meaning and recognition to them according to their subjective realities. Chapter Six identified dynamics which trigger citizen subjectivity (the sense of being a citizen) and citizen agency (the capacity to take action as a citizen). These are:

i) **When personal capacity is built/rebuilt** to address the internalisation of responsibility and blame for marginalisation and powerlessness. It requires recognition of one's own value as a necessary step from which participants were able to identify a sense of rights, and the capacity to act.

ii) **Relational agency** - people also identified a sense of citizenship agency when they felt valued and recognised in relationships with others. This relational dimension is important when exclusion from aspects of citizenship is experienced as invisibility and isolation. The stories provide evidence that building relationships contributes to becoming visible or acknowledged, and are an important aspect of fostering citizen agency.

iii) **Triggers -** The findings suggest that citizen subjectivity can be triggered through a moment of crisis, which brings into focus the dissonance between a citizen's own values and the norms that they experience in their daily life. Access to alternative discourses and spaces can foster critical capacities to analyse this dissonance, and provide support to take action.

These aspects are interlinked. For citizens in marginalised settings, building personal capacity means (re)gaining self-respect when through spatial or economic circumstances, or through negative discourses and attitudes towards aspects of their identities, they have felt powerless or invalidated. As the digital stories have illustrated, personal agency is generated when a person finds the strength to say 'enough!' (see Maria's story, section 6.2.3). A sense of self is also linked to place, and to spaces

of participation through feeling connected to other people in these spaces, and gaining their recognition. The dynamics of these spaces are not linear; they offer opportunities and constraints simultaneously. For example, spaces of citizen participation can become sites of neoliberal governmentality (as highlighted by Lefebvre, 1974; Harvey, 2005; Carmel and Harlock, 2008), limiting or channelling the kind of citizen agency that is possible, as described by Sara when she joins the Family Cabinet (see section 5.2.1). However, these spaces may also offer an opportunity for citizens to build relational agency, and to gain confidence, as is the case for Rosa and Carolina when they participate in their local family cabinets in Matagalpa, and for Colin when he joined the housing committee in Bristol.

This emphasis on the importance of relational citizenship supports Kallio, Häkli and Bäcklund's (2015) suggestion that territorial analyses of governance can be enriched by exploring relational modes of practicing agency. However, accounts of 'power with' can be uncritical, and romanticise the collective. While it is a crucial counterweight to the over-burdened neoliberal individual, it is important to be aware that the collective is also shaped by governmentality. Moreover, and as this research has observed in the dynamic of the Family Cabinets in Nicaragua, the collective can tend to reinforce social norms and marginalise or fail to engage with the concerns and perspectives of women, the elderly, and other minorities, especially when these groups are also spatially and economically disadvantaged. This confirms the importance of developing critical capacities that bring into focus the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion operating in people's everyday experiences of citizenship. The power dynamics of these spaces need to be navigated; a strength that some citizens bring to their engagement is their capacity to engage in the space but critique it at the same time, for example those who see the Family Cabinets in Matagalpa as an opportunity to practise their agency, while recognising that positions of authority within it are abused by some.

Where the community itself is the site of governmentality, it is more diffuse and difficult to critique. Even so, through the stories and the power analyses both groups demonstrated a critical awareness of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in their communities; for example the spatial dynamics highlighted in Bristol by Alfie (see section 5.2.2). For some, the convergence of exclusionary dynamics is so limiting that they can only find expression as citizens in alternative spaces which offer alternative discourses of inclusion; for example Bartolo's participation in spaces of LGBT activism. Such alternative spaces in which marginalising discourses can be challenged and disrupted are vitally important. Rosa for example, builds her confidence in the alternative space of a women's organisation, to the point where she is able to be active in her own community to help other women. This finding extends Davies and Gannon's (2006) and Siisiäinen's (2014) argument that spaces in which citizens associate can be

important alternative spaces in which marginalising norms and discourses can be disrupted. However, it is important to remember that such spaces are also sites in which power is exercised and inequalities may be perpetuated.

7.2.4 Contribution to theory

It is important to emphasise that this study has been limited to one site in each of two countries. It does not claim to be representative, yet the combined findings resonate with the wider literature on citizenship and marginalisation, and the similarities noted in the comparative analysis suggest that the findings are relevant beyond these two sites. The research makes a contribution to theory in four aspects.

It has applied a neoliberal governmentality approach to understanding citizenship in comparative perspective. Neoliberal governmentality theory has usefully identified the hidden or informal ways in which government controls and shapes citizens through technologies such as discourses and spaces, but this scholarship has tended to be Eurocentric (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002), lacking insights into the dynamics of socio-political processes in post-colonial settings of the Global South (Robins *et al*., 2008; Adebanwi, 2017). The evidence discussed here has demonstrated that a neoliberal governmentality approach (interpreted as discourse and spaces) can provide insights into dynamics of citizen inclusion and marginalisation in both visibly neoliberal settings such as England, but also in hybrid regimes in the global South such as Nicaragua. In both sites, it has shown how government discourses and spaces interact with prevailing social norms and beliefs to shape citizens' behaviours and ideas of citizenship.

Secondly, enriching a neoliberal governmentality approach with emphasis on agency in this research supports and extends Bevir's (2018) argument that governmentality theory needs to be enriched with greater sensitivity to diversity and resistance. This study builds on the work of Turner (2016), Santos (2012), Mayblin (2016), and Martin and Waring (2018), which highlights the importance of making visible processes of marginalisation. It reveals how, in the contradictions between governmental discourses and people's realities, there is potential for political subjectivities to emerge when these contradictions become visible. This is significant, because it evidences how agency is practised when marginalised citizens begin to articulate alternative knowledge and narratives about themselves and their ideas of citizenship – even those who had felt themselves to be 'non citizens' and quite powerless such as Rosa in Matagalpa, or Emilia in Bristol. Furthermore, these imaginaries can be shared across identity, cultural and geographical boundaries, building solidarities and bonds of affective citizenship.

Thirdly, the grounded understanding of citizenship agency generated though participatory methods in this research, responds to the need to orient research into 'active' citizenship beyond government

rhetoric and programmes and contextualises the concept in everyday life (Robins *et al*., 2008). It draws attention to the need to recognise differentiated experiences at the personal or micro-level, and resonates with feminist theorisations of citizenship such as Yuval-Davis' (1999) suggestion of 'universality in diversity', Lister's (2007) inclusive citizenship and Prilleltensky's (2008) psycho-political approach. The original contribution of my approach has been to disaggregate the concept of agency, demonstrating that a sense of citizen agency is connected to experiences of participation in the private, personal, public and political spheres and across different identities. The findings thus highlight the need to acknowledge the psychological as well as political boundaries of citizenship, and provides new insights for policy that citizenship has legal and material but also symbolic and emotional significance for people. Sustainable efforts to build active citizenship will require attention to all of these dimensions.

Finally, this study has contributed insights into how citizen agency can be triggered. I have drawn on the work of Habermas (1984, 1987), Burns *et al*. (2013) and Turner (2016), to theorise agency as a dynamic process. Starting with Turner's idea of citizen agency as political subjectivity, which he argues can be engendered when an injustice is perceived, I extend this idea by identifying how agency can be triggered in people's everyday lives when they become aware of a cognitive dissonance between their identities and values, and how others perceive and treat them – for example Maria's realisation of the conflict between her home life and her work with the community organisation. This emphasis on the everyday builds on the 'everyday maker' citizens of Davies' (2013) account of small-scale gradual activism, and the activism of Neveu's (2015) ordinary and non-political citizen, to highlight the importance of small contestations of everyday forms of marginalisation. The evidence discussed here points to a new dimension of this everyday contestation: the importance of spaces in which citizens may (re)claim a sense of self, of their right to belong, and to be recognised according to their different identities.

7.3 Contribution of methods and methodological implications

7.3.1 Mixing participatory and qualitative research methods for depth and breadth

The methodological contribution of this research is to demonstrate how qualitative and participatory research methods can work together to create a research design that can be applied in two very different contexts, and respond to macro- and micro-level research questions. The study combined document analysis with participatory and qualitative research methods, to gather and generate data

from policy documents, key informants and with groups of co-researchers. The datasets are complementary: the analysis of policy discourses and the key informant interviews provided insights into the pre-identified research themes in context; while the co-inquiry groups – via a range of participatory methods – generated and analysed data relating to personal and collective experiences of citizenship, and grounded the analysis of discourse and spaces in their lived experiences. The staged process with its three cycles, enabled participants to reflect on their experiences and critically analyse them, in a way that would not be possible in a one-off interview.

The methods combined oral and visual as well as written forms of data production, which enabled different ways of knowing to be expressed, including embodied (experienced, felt and expressed through the body) and emotional, as well as cognitive and rational. This validated Heron's (1996) 'extended epistemology' as relevant to an inquiry into citizenship, because it enabled participants to draw on what they have experienced and felt, reflect on it in the participatory inquiry space, and generate and communicate meaning (through their stories); which may then point to either future action by them, or proposals for policy reform.

The participatory methods therefore are significant for understanding citizenship from the perspective of the participants' own experience and their own analysis, and the space created for this analysis is integral to the research itself. The research confirms that digital storytelling, understood as a process rather than just a means of producing a digital product (Shaw, 2015), offers a route through which participants who have felt themselves to be marginalised, may develop a sense of themselves as agents, as Hull and Katz (2006) have argued. A particular contribution of the participatory inquiry process, is that it draws out people's differentiated experiences of the challenges and exclusions to their citizenship, but also their aspirations for more equal and just terms of engagement with the state and with regard to how they are perceived in society.

As discussed in 3.6.2, in adopting a PAR approach, I aspired to meet the PAR evaluation criteria of validity and ethics (Bradbury and Reason, 2006). This involved taking the time to develop a safe communicative space in which the co-researchers could begin to voice the unspoken, investigate and analyse their own stories, in dialogue with others. While this is time consuming, it enabled a deepening of the inquiry and increased significance of the research process for the co-researchers, as it proved to be an affirming process for them as well as generating rich data. They were able to take away a research product of their own, and felt that they had learned about themselves, each other and gained new skills. The cycles of the process also enabled greater consequence of the work for the co-researchers, as they critically reflected on their experiences, and identified and challenged norms and orthodoxies that had undermined their sense of agency.

While the participatory process needed to be adapted to context (see Chapter Three), the core steps, questions and methods were successfully applied in both settings. The methods enabled a nuanced approach to researching citizenship, which has made it possible to see how citizenship is differently experienced according to the context, in marginalised settings, but also according to gender, sexuality, age and disability. This approach, that pays attention to how citizenship is experienced according to different subjectivities and in marginalised settings, has also enabled connections to be made *across* sites. The findings identify that self-respect, recognition and inclusion according to different identities, are centrally important to citizens in both settings, suggesting that this methodological approach is useful in diverse settings, and can generate comparable data.

In adopting a comparative approach, this research has combined a micro focus on people's experiences of citizenship in their everyday lives and in the context of specific policies and programmes (May, 2008), with a bigger picture or macro focus on how citizenship is shaped through complex processes, as social policies interact with ideas, policies, political and cultural norms at different scales and contexts (Kennett, 2013). The comparative analysis has generated both theoretical insights and methodological innovation. It has demonstrated that a neoliberal governmentality approach with emphasis on agency resonates richly in both contexts. Differences were expected between the global North, neoliberalised context of England and the global South, socialist-hybrid context of Nicaragua. The similarities and resonances between sites are therefore more arresting. There is limited comparative work that compares experiences across this global North/South country divide; especially scarce is research that combines qualitative with participatory methods. This combination addresses the critiques voiced about governmentality theory being too general and lacking grounding (Brady, 2014; Flew, 2012), or too Euro-centric (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). Critiques that participatory research approaches achieve depth but lack contextual analysis or rigour (Kindon *et al*., 2007), are also addressed.

There are also limitations encountered in the research process, some of which have been discussed in Chapter Three. Limitations of the specific methods are discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2. Problems arising during the data collection and how these were addressed, are identified in 3.3; and how the research design was adapted to context is discussed in 3.4. Below, I reflect on the limitations of the research design to achieve the research purpose, and propose some ways in which these might be addressed in future research.

7.3.2 Limitations

The research strategy was designed to enable individual (first person), group (second person) and inter-group (third person) reflection using a co-inquiry approach. As described in 7.3.1, the first-person deep inquiry, and the second-person group reflection, dialogue and critical analysis, were achieved. Third person reflection (i.e. between the two co-inquiry groups, or between the groups and other communities) was more limited. An ambition of the research design was to bridge learning between bodies of literature and between citizens themselves, residing in the 'global North' and the 'global South'. Santos (2012) has appealed to academics and activists to engage with epistemologies of the South, and one way to do this is to critically assess experiences of marginality in countries in both 'North' and 'South'.

This study has enabled a critical assessment in each site, however its scope in facilitating 'mutual understanding and recognition' (Santos 2012, p.58) *between* sites has been limited. We viewed and discussed the stories from each other's sites, but failed in the timeframe to establish a deeper connection and appreciation. The stories were a good vehicle for sharing – and the fact that both groups had undergone a similar process was important. Some questions arose about context, social norms and participation that could have developed into a dialogue, but this was the point at which I had to disengage. Future work could extend the inquiry process to support the groups in this dialogue between sites.

Extending this process would also involve accompanying the groups within each site in a more action-oriented participatory research phase. This phase could support participants to move from critical analysis to plans for action, where appropriate bringing in additional participants, and opening up some parallel strands of inquiry (Burns, 2015; Percy-Smith, 2018). In Nicaragua a specific strand of interest to the co-researchers could be to inquire further into citizenship and gender-based violence, and in Bristol a strand might open up on citizenship, mental health and isolation.

More broadly, it is an urgent task to build the capacities of groups such as these to articulate their concerns, critiques and proposals into the public domain given that, in both settings, political and economic polarisation has increased since the end of my fieldwork period, which deepens the marginalisation of citizens such as those who participated in this research. A way to widen the inquiry would be to invite other stakeholders such as service providers to engage in the process; to present them the participatory data and analysis, and to facilitate a dialogue. This is of critical importance in both England and Nicaragua, where the realities of citizens living in marginalised settings need to be better understood by policy makers, in order to design more inclusive and sustainable community services and local development plans, and avoid further marginalising certain groups. However,

attempts to link these inquiry groups to policy spaces for dialogue with decision makers would have proved impossible and potentially put participants at risk in Nicaragua, where the space for dialogue has continued to shrink. In April 2018, growing frustration at the lack of democratic process, drove tens of thousands of people to take to the streets in protest marches. These have been violently suppressed and many protestors have been arrested or have fled the country.

At a time of increasing political polarisation, the rise of populism and the reconfiguration of civic space, it would be useful to build on the contribution of this research to consider how decentralised democratic mechanisms can evolve principles and procedures that maintain the balance between state control and citizen autonomy. This research has relevance in many other settings where there is a risk of the rise of populism, after decades of harsh policies which have diminished citizenship and expectations of democratic inclusion and deliberation.

In conclusion, the research design has attempted to integrate methods that could facilitate data generation and analysis of both how the state shapes citizenship in visible and hidden ways; and how citizens understand and experience their citizenship, in two very different settings. I have answered these questions through a combination of document analysis with qualitative and participatory research methods and analysis, weaving a path between participatory analysis and qualitative desk-based analysis (see 3.5). This has required iteration and layering of the analysis, revisiting and reflecting on the literature and analytical framework in the light of the participatory analysis and findings. Acknowledging the shortcomings addressed above and in Chapter Three, the selected design, data collection and analysis, have effectively enabled the research questions to be addressed both with some breadth, enabling an understanding of context, and also with depth and nuance in the comparative analysis of personal stories of citizenship.

7.4 Policy recommendations

This research has evidenced that although citizenship is provided for through national legislation and international conventions, it is experienced in differential ways as citizenship rights are translated into policy through discourses and spaces. The research evidences how people's sense of citizenship is shaped by these processes, and how their agency as citizens is shaped according to their identities and the related inequalities they experience. The cost of not paying attention to such experiences means that some will continue to be marginalised, and feel themselves not to be heard, recognised

and included, undermining the fundamental reciprocity of the relationship between state and citizen. Five cross-national policy lessons are suggested.

First, ensure that policies do not create conditional citizenship. The study confirms the relevance of a universal idea of citizenship as rights which resonates across very different policy contexts. The research also demonstrates how citizen rights are differently experienced according to subjective experiences of marginalisation. If governments fail to pay attention to the impact of marginalisation on citizen rights, and allow their discourses and spaces to promote an understanding of citizenship which is conditional, stigmatising or manipulated, this is likely to alienate citizens and impact on their wellbeing. In Nicaragua, policymakers should pay attention to the dynamics which create conditional access to citizen rights along political party, religious or other social divides, and develop strategies to mitigate or avoid these exclusionary practices. In England, government should review and address the framing and delivery of welfare policies. Ensuring a clearer rights framing of welfare could reduce the risk of stigma.

Second, guarantee spaces for democratic engagement and allow contestation. Nicaragua has demonstrated that mechanisms for citizen participation can be enabled even when public spending is under pressure, and this is a lesson for England. In England, efforts can be renewed to open up spaces for democratic dialogue, facilitating the inclusion of different perspectives. This will require investment in democratic mechanisms. In both settings, governments could invest in processes which facilitate citizens' dialogue across different identities, and with policymakers. In Nicaragua, the growing polarisation and civil unrest highlights how, while the Family Cabinets are an opportunity to promote inclusive citizenship and democratic dialogue, this has not been realised. Policies and spaces for citizen participation need to allow contestation and actively seek to engage people across political party divisions.

Third, policy invitations for active citizenship, citizen participation and voluntary action should seek to reduce the barriers to participation created by experiences of marginalisation, including identity-based. Failure to do this can deny citizenship to some groups. Existing mechanisms for citizen participation offer citizens the opportunity to engage in democratic processes, and for the state to fulfil its democratic mission. What is missing in both settings, is attention to what enables or prevents different and especially marginalised citizens from engaging. There is a tendency to prescribe generic approaches to citizenship, inclusion and participation, and to roll out an approach which is expected to work in every setting, regardless of income, age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, or level of education. An understanding of citizenship as multi-subjective can enhance policies aiming to promote active citizenship and social accountability.

Fourth, in order to promote inclusive and active citizenship, governments can enable grassroots collectives and organisations, and strengthen their capacity to reach and support people living in marginalised settings. In England, such policies need to move beyond a focus on work, and support people to participate in activities that build self-confidence and enable small scale volunteering which can pave the way for acts of citizenship. Community-based activities and action research processes can support and sustain the opening of spaces for citizens to build confidence and relational citizenship capacities, and begin to address the conundrum of how the state can engage meaningfully with citizens, beyond the 'usual suspects'. Where appropriate, these or other alternative spaces can be used to open up dialogue with the state and other stakeholders to ensure that a diversity of voices and perspectives are informing and shaping policy.

Finally, this study indicates the value for policymakers of paying attention to stories as research data. The individuals involved as co-researchers in this study speak of their own experiences, but also illustrate the issues faced by many others who are experiencing marginalisation in each setting. Through their stories it is possible to better understand the barriers and enablers of agentive citizenship for single parents, older people, people with disabilities, and people with sexual, religious or ethnic minority identities.

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List of Acronyms

ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América
ALBANISA	ALBA de Nicaragua, SA (Ltd)
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CPC	Citizens Power Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
COP	Community Organisers Programme
DST	Digital Story Telling
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MEFCCA	Ministerio de Economía Familiar Comunitaria, Cooperativa y Asociativa
NCS	National Citizen Service

Appendices

A1 Key informant interview schedule

Research Questions	Operationalisation for interview schedule
How do policies frame citizenship rights and practices?	• What kind of citizenship is articulated in welfare policy and other policies (e.g. the 'Cabinets')? • How is volunteering understood? • On what terms do people access welfare?
What are the institutional spaces for citizen participation?	• In what spaces can people exercise citizenship? • On what basis are they recognised? On what basis are they excluded? What is the prevailing discourse of citizenship? Has it changed in the last 5 (post crisis), 25 (pre-crisis) years? Have spaces opened/closed? • What are considered to be effective ways for citizens to participate?
How do citizens experience these policies?	• Can citizens be clients? And clients be citizens? • In what ways do you (or could you) engage with the state? • What makes you feel un/able to act as citizens?
Through what alternative discourses and spaces do people generate a sense of citizenship?	• Does local 'everyday' activity generate citizenship? • Is there a redefinition of citizenship taking place? • What are you involved in, in terms of local activities, individually or as a group? • Which activities / groups give you a sense of identity?
What do people understand by 'citizenship', and what makes them feel that they are 'acting' as citizens?	• Is what people do e.g. at the local school or neighbourhood watch, or community garden etc a kind of citizenship? How is it meaningful? • What would 'being a citizen' look like in an ideal world? What relationships define citizenship?

A2 Project Information Sheet

Project title: What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in Bristol (England) and Matagalpa (Nicaragua)

Researcher: Jo Howard, doctoral student at University of Bristol

Project description for research participants

The aim of the project.

This research project is part of my PhD research. It is independent.

This research will take place in two places: in Matagalpa (Nicaragua) and in Bristol (England). In each place I would like to work with a group of people who are interested in sharing with me how they feel about where they live, and their experience of being citizens.

The research is concerned with the experiences of people who live in the Barton Hill area of Bristol. I would like to know about your experiences of living here, and your understanding of what it means to be a citizen. I hope that the findings that come out of our discussions will lead to recommendations that can improve government policies towards citizens.

About taking part.
You are being invited to take part in this study because you are a local resident and you are active in some way in your community. You may take part in all of it, or a small part of it. The research process will include a one-to-one interview, and then six 2-hour workshops between September 2015 and May 2016. We will make some digital stories, which involve developing a story that you want to tell, and taking a small number of photos to illustrate your story. These stories will be yours to keep.

If you are interested in taking part in this project, please write your name, contact details and tell me the best time of day for you to come to a meeting. I will then organise a meeting to explain more about the research process, and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have and decide if you are still interested.

Your name:

Contact details:

Preferred time of day to meet: Daytime …… Evening …… Weekend ……

For further information, you can email me at jo.howard@bristol.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6755, email: sps-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

A3 Project invitation to participate

Project title: What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in England and Nicaragua.

Researcher: Jo Howard, doctoral student at University of Bristol

Project description for research participants

The aim of the project.
This research will take place in two places: in Matagalpa (Nicaragua) and in Bristol (England). In each place I would like to work with a group of people who are interested in sharing with me how they feel about where they live, and their experience of being citizens.

The research is concerned with the experiences of people who live in Lawrence Hill. I would like to know your experiences, and hope that the findings that come out of our discussions will lead to recommendations that can improve government policies towards citizens.

About taking part.
You are being invited to take part in this study because you are a local resident and you are active in some way in your community. There is no obligation to take part, and you may take part in all of it, or a small part of it.

If you are interested in taking part in this project, I will invite you to a meeting to discuss the project. At this meeting, I will describe the research process, and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have and decide if you are still interested. If you wish to take part, I will then ask you to sign a form saying that you understand what the study is about and that you have voluntarily agreed to take part.

The research process will include a one-to-one interview, and then six half-day workshops at two-monthly intervals, with refreshments. If you agree, I will voice record the sessions so that nothing important that you say gets lost. We will make some digital stories, which involve taking a small number of photographs that are meaningful to you, which you will use to illustrate your story. These photographs will only appear in any publication which arises from this research with your consent. We will discuss the use of photos in greater detail before this phase of the research, and signing this form does not constitute consent over my use of these photographs. If the photos identify you, we will discuss the implications for confidentiality and decide together whether you wish to publish them. If the photos identify any other person, we will need to get their written consent. If they do not consent, we will not use the photo in the story.

Do you have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this project. If you do decide to take part you are still free to stop at any time. If you want to stop you do not have to give any reason. You will be able to withdraw your data (your interview, your digital story) if you wish, and it will not be used in the research publications without your consent. If you consent to me using your data in my research, I will take care that it is anonymised.

What will happen to all the information you provide?
All information collected during the project will be treated confidentially. It will be kept securely (in a password protected folder and/or a locked filing cabinet) for ten years, according to the data protection act. I will not share the recordings or my notes with anyone, and your identity will always be hidden in anything I write. I will discuss the findings with you

before writing my report. The findings will published in a PhD thesis. I hope that the research will produce useful findings that can improve government policies. You will not be identifiable in any publication or policy briefing that is produced, unless you and the group decide otherwise.

Contact for further information

For further information, please email me at jo.howard@bristol.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6755, email: sps-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

A4 Participant consent form

Project title: What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in England and Nicaragua.

Researcher: Jo Howard, University of Bristol

	Please circle
Have you read the project description?	Y/N
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the project?	Y/N
Have you received enough information about the project?	Y/N
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time?	Y/N
Do you agree to participate in the project?	Y/N
Do you agree to allow me to record research activities?	Y/N
Do you understand that what you say during the research activities will be treated confidentially?	Y/N
Do you understand that the researcher is obliged to disclose information if she is concerned that you or someone else is at risk, or if she is concerned about illegal activity?	Y/N
Do you understand that, following university research protocols, the project data will be stored for 10 years (in an appropriate storage facility)?	Y/N
Do you understand that any photos of you will not be used in the research without your consent?	Y/N

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	date	signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of researcher	date	signature

Contact for further information
If you need any further information, please contact me on 07760 401252, or email jo.howard@bristol.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6755, email: sps-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

A5 Third party confidentiality agreement

Project title: 'What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England and Nicaragua'.

I [print name] _____ agree to support Jo Howard in the facilitation/transcription of workshops as part of the doctoral research project **'What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England and Nicaragua'.**

I understand that any information disclosed during the research activities is confidential, and I will not use the data or publish it in any form.

Name of co-facilitator date signature

_____ _____ _____

Name of researcher date signature

Contact for further information
If you need any further information, please contact me on 07760 401252, or email jo.howard@bristol.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ. Tel: 0117 954 6755, email: sps-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

A6 Collective Research Ethics Protocol

Project title: 'What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England and Nicaragua'.

Citizenship Research Group (Matagalpa/Bristol)

We the undersigned have agreed to participate in the research project 'Making Sense of Citizenship' (A participatory and comparative analysis of expressions of citizenship in marginalised settings in England and Nicaragua)'.

We agree to treat confidentially any information that our fellow participants share in the research.

We will not share any information or images from the project without the consent of all participants. We understand that this is our research, and that we can use it for advocacy purposes if we are all in agreement.

We will behave with respect to each other.

We will listen carefully to each other's views and stories, and take care not to judge or to criticize.

We will respect that women and men, older and younger people, people of different abilities, ethnicities and sexualities all have equal rights to be heard and to be treated with respect.

We agree that our discussions in the research group, and the stories we develop, can be used as data in Jo Howard's PhD thesis.

Signed (Print Names):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date: _____

A7 Digital Story-Telling Consent Form

Project title: What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in disadvantages neighbourhoods in England and Nicaragua.

Researcher: Jo Howard, University of Bristol. Doctoral candidate

Storyteller's name or pseudonym: _____

Postal address: _____
_____
_____
_____

Contact telephone numbers:
_____

I give consent for my digital story titled

_____

and developed at a workshop held on (insert date) _____

to be used by Jo Howard (PhD researcher) in any way that is not for commercial benefit.

Please tick one:

- My digital story can be used
- I do not give consent for my story to be used in any way.

Signed (Narrator): _____

Witnessed by (Researcher):
_____

Date: _____

A8 Researcher Safety Protocol

Project title: What does it mean to be a citizen here? Experiences of citizenship in disadvantages neighbourhoods in England and Nicaragua.

Researcher: Jo Howard, University of Bristol. Doctoral candidate

This research will be conducted in deprived neighbourhoods in Bristol (England) and Matagalpa (Nicaragua). Interviews will be conducted in a public place. I expect to develop a relationship of trust with the research group. However, it is important to have a procedure in place in case of an emergency.

If I visit a participant at home, I will first inform my husband or my supervisor (in Bristol) of my plans. In Nicaragua, I will inform my colleague and friend Joel Zuniga. They all understand the confidentiality of the identity of the research participants.

If I need assistance I will phone or send a text message. I will always carry a mobile phone, which I will ensure is charged.

In Bristol, I will travel to interviews by bike in the daytime, and by car at night.

In Nicaragua, I will travel to interviews on foot (daytime only) or by registered taxi at night.

In an emergency, I will dial 999 (in England) and 118 (in Nicaragua).

A9 Photographic Consent Form

The undersigned hereby authorises Jo Howard and the Citizenship Research Group to photograph them.

Name (please print) _____

I authorise Jo Howard and the Citizenship Research Group to use and display, or to permit the use and display of said photographs in any publication, multimedia production, display, or world-wide web publication. This means that your photo may be used i) in an event in the local community, ii) in a citywide event, or iii) posted on vimeo or youtube.

I agree that Jo Howard and the Citizenship Research Group may use any name, likeness, or biographical information supplied by me.

I release and forever discharge Jo Howard and the Citizenship Research Group from any and all claims and demands arising out of, or in connection with, the use of the said photographs / images, including but not limited to, any claims for invasion of privacy or defamation.

Accepted and Agreed:

_____ Signature of Individual Photographed

_____ Signature of Witness

_____ Date

A10 In-depth interview prompts

Theme 1: Identity

Returning to your 'River of Life':

What makes you feel 'you'? *dreams, aspirations*

What have been key moments?

Do you feel the same person now? Why?

Is there a particular moment when things changed (if they did)

What difference does being a woman/man make to who you are?

What about age, ethnicity, children, schooling, income, health, religion etc?

What are your values? What values guide what you do? Are these values part of who you are?

Theme 2: Belonging

Where do you live? Since when?

What does this place mean to you? Is it important?

How do you get on with your neighbours?

Theme 3: Power and Empowerment

What does power mean to you?

When do you feel like you have power? In which situations?

When do you feel powerless? In which situations? What kinds of things make you feel powerless [*violencia, exclusión, el no ser escuchada, la falta de poder de decisión …]*

Is citizenship about power? How?

Theme 4: Relationships

Which relationships are most important to you?

What groups do you go to? Organisations you belong to? (community, social, religious)

Is it important to you to belong to this group?

What does the group do? Does it try to change anything? Does it work with other groups/orgs?

Do you have any contact with organisations in the State/public sector? [*escuela, centro de salud, alcaldía, etc]*

Have you in your group ever tried to change something? How did you feel about it?

A11 Storyboarding matrix

The storyboarding should be preceded by the story-telling, so that the story is flowing already. As the story starts to take shape, each sentence, phrase or idea can be put in each box in the first column. In the second column, describe an image that you will use/make to illustrate that sentence.

Script by sentence	**Picture/image**
My life as a citizen began when …	Picture of me when …
Before …	Drawing
Then something happened …	Image from internet
It was good/bad because …	Image that conveys emotion

A12 Management of interviews and transcripts

Transcript description	Name in thesis
Co-inquiry workshops	
Bristol Co-inquiry Group first meeting	Co-inquiry 1, Bri
Matagalpa Co-inquiry Group first meeting	Co-inquiry 1, Mat
Developing the Digital Story workshop Matagalpa	DS Workshop, Mat
Developing the Digital Story workshop Bristol	DS Workshop, Bri
Power analysis workshop Matagalpa	Power Workshop, Mat
Power analysis workshop - Bristol	Power Workshop, Bri
River of Life workshop Mat	RoL Workshop, Mat
River of Life workshop Bri	RoL Workshop, Bri
Viewing the Digital Stories Nicaragua	Viewing DS, Nic
Viewing the Digital Stories Bristol	Viewing DS, Bri
Interviews with national key informants (Nicaragua only)	
Interview with Chief Exec of national CSO, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_1
Interview with Chief Exec of national CSO, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_2
Interview with academic, national university, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_3
Interview with lawyer and activist (national), Nicaragua	N_NCSO_4
Interview with Chief Exec of national CSO, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_5
Interview with ex-coordinator of national social movement, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_6
Interview with chief exec of national CSO, Nicaragua	N_NCSO_7
Interview with senior politician	N_NGov_1
Interview with national government advisor, Nicaragua	N_NGov_2
Interview with national government civil servant, Nicaragua	N_NGov_3
Interviews with local key informants (Matagalpa and Bristol)	
Interview with Chief Exec of local CSO, Matagalpa	N_LCSO_1
Interview with Chief Exec of local CSO, Bristol	B_LCSO_1
Interview with local CSO leader, Matagalpa	N_LCSO_2
Interview with local CSO leader, Bristol	B_LCSO_2
Interview with activist in Matagalpa Family Cabinet	N_FC_1
Interview with coordinator in Matagalpa Family Cabinet	N_FC_2
Interview with local CSO leader, Bristol	B_LCSO_3
Interview with local government civil servant, Bristol	B_LGov_1
Interview with local government senior civil servant, Bristol	B_LGov_2
fieldnotes (monthly summaries)	JH Fieldnotes + date
In-depth interviews with members of co-inquiry groups	Pseudonym, City
Transcripts of digital stories (Matagalpa and Bristol)	Pseudonym, DS, City

A13 Participatory Workshop Session plan

Session	Purpose	Activities	Requirements
Session 1: The Gathering	Prepare participants so that they understand the digital story telling (DST) process	- Icebreaker - Short reflection on the previous workshop (River of Life) – share some thoughts with the person next to you - Share any key points (facilitator – emphasise observations relating to identity, citizenship) - **Explain the steps in the DST process** • Finding your story • Story Circle • Getting the story down on paper • Thinking of images to illustrate your story • Taking photos/drawing images • Getting the images onto the computer/tablet • Deciding on the order of the images • Recording the story • Watching the stories as a group Consent and permissions	Dataprojector internet connection Explain that I will lend digital cameras to those who need one
Session 2: Story Circle – *Tell us about a time when you felt like you were a citizen/weren't a citizen. Why?*	Finding the story – writing a first draft of your script	**Plenary** – word game (or with photos) to help stimulate descriptive language and visual images **15'** **Story constructed around a theme. First person narrative** **Individual**: first attempt to write a few words. Tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. **15'** **Group: Story circle – 30' (5 mins each)** **Individual** – write down the feedback, work on story again, supported by facilitators who help by asking questions – (45') Take your story home to improve it	Voice record the session. Facilitators keep note of discussion, especially in story circle, and help participants to revise their scripts Participants can think of images / photos to bring to next session.

Session	Purpose	Activities	Requirements
Session 3: Storyboard	Improve and finalize the story; design the storyboard	Pictionary Game for thinking visually Show participants a storyboard table to show them how to think through the distribution of images Participants develop their storyboard Think about images /photos (need 20-25, end up with 10-15) Agree sharing of digital cameras – work in pairs?	Paper for storyboards Photos/images Digital cameras or phone cameras Offer one-to-one support to finish story or to develop storyboard
Session 4: Voiceover	Record the voiceover Transfer photos & images	Individual – practice reading your story; record in one go if possible. Bring photos Upload (Tom to help)	i-pads. Quiet room Stagger people through the morning and across days
Session 5: Finalise the digital story	Edit and finish	Participants work with facilitators to bring together the images with the narrative Add title Draw/find images for any gaps	Save onto hard-drive and memory sticks We could split into 2 groups
Session 6: Viewing	Share the stories in the group	The first viewing should not include analysis. This is a viewing only to celebrate our achievement.	Projector Record conversation Give everyone their story on a memory stick

Session	Purpose	Activities	Requirements
Session 7:	Participants reflect on each other's stories and identify factors which enable or block people's possibilities of acting as a citizen To identify common and divergent factors between stories within and between sites.	Warm up activity to get people thinking about sources of power (see Veneklasen & Miller book) - elicit possible sources of power, what power looks like, if we have it, or others, why etc Show the Bristol stories 1 by 1 … give a few minutes after each story for people to think, and write down their thoughts on power in this story. After all stories are shown, feedback randomly, facilitators write up into a matrix Collectively agree symbols for power over, with, within, to … and they can go and stick them up on the matrix Show the Nicaragua stories 1 by 1, … give a few minutes after each story for people to think, and write down their thoughts on power in this story. Do you see any differences? Similarities? Power/citizenship?	Projector Memory sticks Certificates Vouchers Nicaragua stories subtitled in English Tea & coffee, Lunch

A14 Digital Story Transcripts

Transcripts: Matagalpa

'Rosa'

My name is [Rosa]. I'm a woman of 30.

I didn't feel like a citizen because my life was very complicated. I lived in a circle of violence – physical and psychological.

I was submissive, dedicated to the family. I didn't have the right to anything, or to decide anything. I lived in a fantasy world, believing that everything that happened to me was normal.

The moment I felt like a citizen was when I separated from my husband.

I realized that I'd been wrong, and that I have value, I have many rights and capacities.

So I decided to go back to school, and I joined the neighbourhood committee.

My neighbours recognized me as a leader.

I work in the local community, and the women's group […] recognizes me as a community leader.

I have my own little house now.

I'm studying. I have a quiet life with my son. I know I have rights and responsibilities. I'm helping at a children's centre.

I continue to help out in the community, to bring piped water, electricity and housing to the neighbourhood.

I think that in spite of circumstances I am happy, I have a happy life.

‘Bartolo’: It was better when I was a kid

I have begun to enjoy things in life – whether it’s to see them or to touch them, that’s what they are there for.

I started to think rationally when I finished secondary school.

We are citizens from our birth, from when we want to do something and we achieve it.

But the time came when some of those things were outlawed and made unreachable. And others came crashing down, hurting me deeply.

From that time onwards, my social responsibility was everything to me.

I always knew what I would study – humanities.

I had to choose from a great range of expensive options, since making money from education is a reality in this country.

My energy was sapped by this capitalist system that didn’t favour me, and the lack of support and encouragement from the state.

I began to look for ways to pay for my studies at one of the most prestigious universities in Nicaragua, since the public universities didn’t offer my degree course in psychology.

Often, I didn’t have enough to pay for my studies and living expenses in another city.

And then I wondered, why is that which life has given to me, taken away from me? What can I do to recover it? Should I try?

I worked to pay for my studies. My time was so limited that I couldn’t get a formal part-time job because of my activist activities. I saw an opportunity for more informal work.

Since I know that what life provides is for us to see, I can’t accept seeing life from behind bars.

Sex work became my best option. I went with powerful people from politics and finance, and even drug traffickers. It was exciting, I don’t deny it. And well paid.

But it was risky. I paid for three years of studies. Now I’m going to recover those things that life gave me. And I’ve come to realise that the state is to blame for my risky lifestyle, and that this is a reality for many young people. Once again, I didn’t feel like a citizen.

I think my contribution has raised awareness amongst many decision makers.

I have the impression that this is an eternal game for humanity.

I felt like a citizen when I was a child, when I didn’t know about anything

And some time I will be able to enjoy my citizenship. And be a universal citizen in a world without barriers or borders that stop me from doing something with my life.

‘Ximena’: My Story

I began university full of enthusiasm, with my white coat and plans to help people that need me. Especially women and children.

This hope is what motivates me to keep fighting in my professional career. And try to keep my spirits up, to be positive, and to have a quiet life.

To pay for my studies I had to look for work all over the place.

I got on well, but not everything is rosy, and when things seem perfect, that’s when it can go wrong.

I started to experience a different form of violence in that protected space, the workplace.

Sexual harassment is a reality in many work places where power and bad practice take advantage of innocence and of people’s poverty. It’s sad when in your workplace you are not valued for your professional skills, only for your body.

We women are treated like sexual objects.

It wasn’t just once, it happened many times, indecent offers in return for promotion.

To relate this to citizenship, it is connected with the abuse of power by the state, and by people who, living in a sexist patriarchal culture, feel ownership over women’s bodies.

I’m disappointed with the justice system – my rights as a woman are not protected.

I don’t feel that justice is done – there’s so much injustice towards women like me, and many other women in certain jobs.

I ask for respect. But having to keep asking can wear a human being out.

‘Carolina’

I’m a woman of 32 years old. I was married at 18, and I’m still with my husband.

We have two children, who we love very much.

It was in 1998 that I felt that I was listened to and that my views were valued, and people listen to me. They invited me to participate in a children’s movement that’s called […].

I began to participate in workshops on children at risk and children’s rights and duties.

This is when I began to speak and have views, and felt that my views were valued.

I feel like people take me into account. Now, I work for the wellbeing of my neighbourhood.

I support different activities in the community. I think I know how to organise my time, because as well as the housework, my children and I go to dance classes in the afternoons. Sometimes after dance class I have a community meeting, and I always attend. Because I know they benefit the neighbourhood.

I feel like a positive citizen, because my views are listened to and valued.

I know how to organise my time and balance my personal and community life.

Now I’m representative of young people in the neighbourhood, They elected me as their coordinator. I represent them in culture and sport, when we need to work with public institutions.

'Lola's story'

I was born into a patriotic household, and both my parents were teachers and encouraged their students and their daughter to be proud of their country. The Nicaraguan flag was always present in our sitting room, and my parents also taught me to sing the national anthem correctly, together with other Nicaraguan songs. I also learned to dance our traditional dances, to the sound of the marimba and the guitar.

I grew up in the 1970s during Somoza's military dictatorship. Without hesitation I knew I had to do my part to free our people from oppression, and I joined the liberation movement.

I survived … I was 18 and my sense of what it meant to be Nicaraguan grew as I got fully involved in the tasks of the revolution.

I helped organize cooperatives in the countryside with agricultural workers, agricultural cooperatives, and to direct the National Literacy Campaign in a municipality of Managua. I did community organizing in the neighbourhoods of Managua, and then I joined the armed forces and spent some time there.

So I got my first identity card as a Nicaraguan citizen and voted for the first time in open elections in 1984. I took part in the Feminist Movement from when it started, and in the LGBT Movement in the 1980s. It wasn't that having an ID card, or the act of voting, made me feel like a citizen. I felt like a citizen when I saw the fruits of all our efforts - to gain the right to have an ID card, and to identify ourselves as Nicaraguan, and to be able to vote for our leaders.

Then, in 1987, I was expelled from the FSLN party, and from my job. This happened because I had blown the whistle about some wrong-doings that the government was committing. I felt like my citizen rights had been cancelled. Nicaragua became my jail for a year. Three years later, there were elections and the Nicaraguan people chose a new president and ruling party, which confirmed to me that I had been right, and I felt happy and worthy again.

So I decided to become a teacher like my parents before me, and to follow their example. I graduated from University, and I started on teaching young people in Matagalpa about our national values that I learnt from my parents, and from my own experience.

Currently, we have a government which, like all governments, does some things that benefit people, and some things which do not. The feeling as a citizen is one of being powerless.

However, together we can achieve things in the community which are good for everyone: drains, electricity cables, drinking water, paving of the main streets, bridges, and all these in coordination with government institutions.

My faith in God gives me the strength to keep on seeing the beautiful side of life in this little piece of the Earth called Nicaragua.

'Maria'

I'm [Maria], and I'm 48 years old.

I was born in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, in the [….] neighbourhood.

I come from a humble, Christian family. We all get along well.

We share happy times and sad times too. I remember some happy and some sad things about my childhood and adolescence.

Like when my mother got sick, and I had to take care of my younger brothers and sisters. And when we'd get together with my grandmother, and with all my cousins, and we'd listen to her stories. My grandmother and my mother were role models for me.

I got married very young at 17 years old. I believed in love and happiness. I had four beautiful children who I love very much.

During the time that I was married – 24 years – I suffered and felt repressed.

It was like living in darkness and silence, without the right to speak or to have opinions.

Until one day, I joined a group in my community that worked with [community-based organisation] and the City Council.

We also worked with the health ministry, [international NGO], [local NGO] amongst others to bring projects to our neighbourhood.

This organisation also gave me training in human rights, laws, health, violence and other things. I then trained men and women and young people in my neighbourhood.

This gave me the strength to break the silence, and say "Enough!" I began to make my own decisions.

I became a leader in my neighbourhood, and gained the respect of children, young people and adults.

I have helped to bring water, electricity, paved roads, latrines and housing to the neighbourhood.

And between the community organisation, Ministry of Health and the local authority, we have organised health festivals.

We also help children, young people and adults to get their birth certificates.

This work makes me feel like a citizen, I'm fulfilled and happy, and I can help others.

Currently, I'm getting trained as a primary and early years teacher. I'm studying at the teacher training college to become a professional. I work as a community preschool teacher, and I also teach primary to young people and adults. And I'm still involved in community organisation.

I'm a single mother with 4 children, 6 grandchildren, and I have my own little house.

It was difficult for me when my mum passed away, and went to live with our Heavenly Father.

I'll hold her in my heart for ever.

Bristol stories

'Alfie' - The Coach Trip

When I was seven years of age, with my friend Malcolm on a Sunday morning, we would chase around the neighbours' houses, asking if they would like to come to Severn Beach on a coach outing. We always got enough people to come, and the trips were made possible by a community-minded man, who had his own Sharabang.

I married in 1966 and had three children, and work was aplenty.

But in 1971, my marriage started to go downhill. I had lost my sister and father, and when my mother died, this left a great void in my life. My wife and I decided to part company, and I found it difficult to live alone with my memories, and I found solace in alcohol.

I lost my home and was living on the streets and in derelict houses until an old friend suggested I come to AA with him. After a while, I started to take AA seriously. I had been living without electricity for 2 years. Power was eventually restored. I'd started to pay back my debts to society. Things started to improve for me, as new life started to flow in.

I met my present partner […], and I started work again, as […] and I embarked on a very exciting new life. I eventually started work again, and took an active role in the community.

I had a tragic setback occur two weeks after I retired from Bristol City Council.

My eldest son died in the Bristol Royal Infirmary of acute alcohol and drug abuse. To combat this, I went to AA meetings twice a day for a month. Community work ceased for three months – I needed time to myself.

I was elected to the [community organisation] board, and served on the committee for three years. I made out application forms for funding for coach trips, for people in the local community, and as a result I've been on many coach trips to all parts of the country, with local residents.

My motivation in this is to do it for people who feel cut off from society. The isolation that council flats can bring, to give them confidence and self-worth.

I must reiterate that none of this would have been possible, if I had not found AA, and for that I am eternally grateful.

‘Colin’ - Equality

What is equality?

It is making certain that all citizens can live in harmony together.

At first, I thought I was isolated because I live on my own.

After I retired, I did not do much.

After about a year, I changed. This was because I got to know neighbours who were members of the area housing committee. They persuaded me to join them. After this, I had conversations with them.

I decided to do some more voluntary work. I then became a member of the housing committee. It’s a pity that this committee is now defunct.

I decided I could also help look after the environment in the area. Bristol City Council did not always approve. We argued with them. We usually got our way in the end.

I felt that I was becoming equal to me peers, doing something useful in the community.

Where I live is an area where refugees come to live. I am annoyed when people tell me that they are inferior for some reason.

After all, we were all born ‘equal’ in the eyes of the church.

Refugees should be encouraged to integrate and become good citizens. I know a lot of them are now doing a useful job on equal terms, but the terms are not always equal.

I’d like to encourage anyone who wants to give something back to the community.

‘Emilia’ - Adapting

As a full time working woman, I felt accepted, confident, and able to participate in society.

I was paying my taxes, contributing to society, and enjoying life.

My life changed dramatically when I found out I was expecting a baby.

It was unexpected and left me feeling confused and isolated.

However, my little bundle of joy was born.

As the months went by, I lost my identity, my confidence, and kind of who I was, what I was. I was lost. Felt I was not going to be able to provide and be a good mum, as I was now on benefits.

I felt like I was taking from society, and not contributing which went against my principles.

However, once my son was six months old, I came to [community organisation].

At this moment, my life changed dramatically for the better. I felt accepted and welcome. I no longer felt isolated, and I had somewhere to go where I could openly talk about how I felt without being judged.

Acceptance of my situation has now been digested, and I have a different but beautiful reason to wake up to and for.

Love of myself, my son, new friends and people I have met since having my child.

I am growing, learning about myself and I have a new life.

Jack's story

I was born in Bristol and educated, worked and live in retirement in Bristol. Here I am a citizen. Others come and settle and forge a new life in the city. They also by their activity become equal citizens.

I was born at Southmead hospital when Southmead was part of Gloucestershire. I grew up in Horfield. Attended Bishop Road School. I saw the blitz and the destruction of much of our city.

I was in the first group of children to get caught in the increased school leaving age. I had with others to remain in education until we were 15 years old. The schools were unprepared for that, and found it difficult to occupy and educate us further. A waste of time.

Working life began at 15, as a plumber's assistant. Fetching materials, cleaning tools, and being helpful. Apprenticeship began at age 16 and lasted until age 21. I learned to be a heating an domestic engineer pipe fitter. Over my working life I had seven employers.

Working full time till age 69 and part time until 73. That was an interesting and very varied time.

On retiring, I though isolation and lonely living would not suit after the activities of work and the fellowship that goes with it.

I started retirement by getting involved with many community activities: […] Community Ltd. […] Gardening Group. […] walking group. Living […]. LinkAge walkers. Bristol Older People's Forum. Citizenship is all about taking part in the useful groups.

At my age, I take part and have great interest in the affairs of our city. I feel justified in praising the good works of a few and criticizing the bad works of many. I speak with the people concerned when possible, and with others who share an interest. I write to those I criticize.

Samira's story

I arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker, and I went into a hostel on my own. I was 19. One day I was very in pain, I suffered three nights, the pain was cruel. I didn't know a dentist existed. Then a health interpreter visited me and she told me I could go to a dentist.

The hostel had an interpreter who helped me with a housing application. I was given a flat in Barton Hill. Someone in the hostel told me that Barton Hill was hell, and not to go there. This scared me, but I needed accommodation, so I went anyway.

I walked all the way from […] to […] to go to the Housing Office. I was scared. What was going to happen? I felt like I was going underground, into the dark. But when you've come from a war, you don't care, you just keep going. You will live, or you will die.

Then I saw a door with a big sign, and I went in to ask for help. The door was open. It was [Community Organisation], and I met […] a community worker. She read my letter and she showed me where to go.

It was so scary, but they showed me my accommodation. I lived for 10 days with no fridge or cooker, just a mattress and bed from the charity shop.

I had a key worker and she helped me understand my rights and how to get access to social services. After this I got indefinite right to stay in the UK. Then I could get a GP and other services.

My first child was born at this time, and I came to [the community organisation] and went to see […]. She took me to the Family Centre to meet the staff. This is the point that my happiness started and my life began as a citizen.

People here have helped me to learn, to get friends and they told me I can do anything. They believed in me. And I've been working here too.

Now, I always get help from [the community organisation], and I help other people as well. And I'm volunteering because I want to pay back something.